

# CAP-FACTS

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## A Good Day, A Very Good Day...but

In the long and productive history of The National Community Action Foundation, yesterday, July 15 2010, will be remembered as one of our most successful days ever. I personally found it one of the most satisfying "Hill days" I have had in over a year. We had two important House Appropriations subcommittee markups. There was a markup by the Energy and Water Appropriations subcommittee, which funds our weatherization program, and the Labor-HHS appropriations subcommittee which funds CSBG, LIHEAP, Head Start and many other programs of vital importance to the low-income community.

Both markups were significant, especially in this era of divisive politics and the daily pressures to reduce spending and lower this year's expected \$1.3 trillion deficit. President Obama has publicly committed to cutting the deficit in half by 2013 and Congressional Democrats and Republicans have climbed aboard the cut-spending train. Both the House and Senate Budget Resolutions called for less domestic discretionary spending than the President proposed back in February. Spending is and will continue to be tight.

Now, on to what happened in appropriations. First, the Labor-HHS markup; although it was the second of the markups, I will describe its actions first.

**CSBG-** As you know the current FY2010 CSBG funding amount is \$700 million. The Administration's FY2011 request was for the same \$700 million. The \$1 billion CSBG stimulus program is set to expire September 30. Reflecting the opinion of the majority of the CAA network we did not seek to extend the program. Yesterday, the House Labor-HHS appropriations subcommittee approved the FY2011 CSBG funding at \$800 million. In both the subcommittee press release and in Chairman David Obey's opening statement the CSBG increase was listed as the Subcommittee's highest priority. A number of Democrats on the appropriations panel were also instrumental in pushing the higher CSBG mark. Representative Betty McCollum (D-MN) was the leader of

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this group. Quite a few Democrats who are not on the appropriations panel also urged an increase- but the real credit, as always, goes to the Chairman of both the Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee and also the Chair of the Full Committee, Representative David Obey. It is clear and has always been, that his appreciation for the work done by the Community Action Agencies in his district and throughout Wisconsin continue to give him confidence in the CAA network. I expect that our relationship here in Washington , as well as our legislative strategies, also played a role in the CSBG increase.

LIHEAP- The Subcommittee provided \$5.1 billion for LIHEAP the same level funding as last year. This was not the Administration's request, which included less than \$3 billion in baseline funding with a complicated formula for the continual release of additional funds. (Such changes in the program would require authorization.) This \$5.1 billion in baseline funding recommendation is an outstanding achievement.

Headstart - the FY 2010 level is \$7.234 billion. The Administration's FY2011 request was for \$8.224 billion. The Subcommittee approved \$8.1 billion. It was clear during the markup and in my conversations with members last night after the markup that the recent GAO report discussing fraud in the Head Start programs has had some "chilling" effects on both Democrats and Republicans. This needs to be watched carefully.

As gratifying and important as the Labor-HHS markup was on a personal basis, the Energy and Water Appropriations subcommittee markup was to the CAA network even more important. Heading into this markup there seemed to be a lot of confusion and uncertainty concerning the future funding for the weatherization program; at least in the field. I have to admit that at times I am unsure of where the Administration envisions this program in a few years. I've even written about this very subject in my [blog](#). But perhaps the most perplexing aspect on weatherization funding was exactly what would happen yesterday. In particular, would Democrats keep weatherization a spending priority?

I realize that there were rumors flying around that weatherization funding was going to be eliminated in FY2011 appropriations. A couple of Washington "advocates" had sent communications to various constituencies that weatherization was in trouble. Quite frankly, I never felt that this was the case. We did take the matter to House Democratic leadership; we met with lots of appropriations members and we organized other House members on weatherization funding, but at no time did we feel that the program funding was in danger. I know a number of CAAs emailed their concern (and panic) that it would be eliminated. I apologize for not getting back to you; our priorities were in Congress. As you know, FY2010 funding is \$210 million. The Administration's FY2011 request was \$300 million, and \$75 million for SEP. Yesterday the House Energy and Water subcommittee approved \$240 million for WAP, a \$120 million

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increase! SEP was funded at \$50 million, \$25 million below the Administration's request.

All in all a great day. However, it was also a day of caution. This year's appropriations process is a marathon, not a sprint. Although yesterday was terrific and propels us a long way towards our funding goals, there still remain many steps, many months and much politics to get beyond. First the Senate hasn't even begun to consider its Appropriations bills. Our programs will be included in a Continuing Resolution. Congress may decide the final appropriations bill levels in November and December. The outcome of the November elections may dictate if that is even possible. If Congress does change hands, key Republican leaders have told us that they may push for a Continuing Resolution to run from October until mid-February at which time a new Congress, led by the expected House Republican majority would attempt to significantly scale back domestic funding.

And, of course, yesterday was the last Labor-HHS appropriations markup to be chaired by David Obey. As you all know he will be retiring at the end of the current session. I've known and worked with Dave for nearly 29 years. He remains, by far, the best member and I think the most effective member of Congress I've ever known. While we feel elation and pride over our good fortune in funding for our programs, we also feel sadness in realizing that this is the last time, at least at the subcommittee level, that David Obey will be in charge. I hope and fully intend to keep him involved in some way with our programs after he leaves Congress.

On a final note, this is a time of tremendous opportunity and potential challenge. We at NCAF are going to continue to give our very best effort not only in Congress and in the Administration but in lots of new initiatives that we think are important to the long term future of our programs. We will be rolling out many of these initiatives this summer. Your continual support for NCAF and especially in these times CAPPAC make all of this possible.

As always...thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Bradley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**David Bradley, Executive Director**

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