



ECAP's "First Things First" Agenda

The Emergency Campaign for America's Priorities (ECAP) is a nationwide campaign of national and grassroots organizations committed to reversing the Administration's policy of drastic cuts to programs that primarily benefit the poor and middle class in order to finance tax cuts that benefit the wealthy and special interests. Our "First Things First" agenda is a plan to fully meet pressing human needs over five years and assure that all pay their fair share.

The 110th Congress can expand opportunity and prosperity for the vast majority of Americans, ensuring long-term economic growth by investing in critical human needs priorities. The ECAP agenda for 2007 is a down payment on reversing the upside-down budget and tax priorities of the Bush Administration and the 109th Congress.

The "First Things First" agenda is based on our shared values that each of us deserves the opportunity to succeed, to have access to adequate health care, food, housing, education and the economic security to live with dignity. And yet, unmet needs are growing – 250,000 child care slots have been lost since 2000, 17 states are facing shortfalls in 2007 in the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), 130,000 housing rental vouchers have been lost since 2004, and Food Stamp benefits average only \$1 per individual for a meal.

To meet critical needs, the 110th Congress must establish a path to fully funding domestic programs serving people in need by 2012.

For FY 2008, Congress must:

- Provide \$450 billion for domestic discretionary spending.
- Increase outdated benefit levels for Food Stamps, fund SCHIP at levels adequate to cover all eligible children, restore funds cut from child support enforcement, and strengthen the unemployment insurance program.
- Reject new tax breaks for the wealthy and special interests, and any changes in the tax system, such as an AMT "fix," that do not make the system more progressive and that do not, at a minimum, replace lost tax revenue.

The 110th Congress must set forth a plan to meet 100 percent of the growing unmet need for services. It must increase the overall non-military, non-homeland security discretionary spending in FY 2008 and produce a significant expansion of services beyond FY 2005 levels, adjusted for inflation and population growth, as a down payment towards fully funding by 2012 those domestic programs serving people in need, with special emphasis on labor, health, education, social services, nutrition, and housing. Congress must also oppose appointed entitlement or other commissions whose primary goal is to cut benefits or limit program eligibility.

Though the irresponsible tax and budget policies of the Bush Administration and previous Congress have left the 110th Congress with significant fiscal challenges, we all have a shared responsibility to pay for these common-good investments through a fair and progressive tax system. This shared responsibility begins with ending the tax handouts that overwhelmingly benefit those making over \$200,000 a year, and eliminating corporate tax breaks and other subsidies that do little to create more economic opportunity and sustainable prosperity.

Pay-Go and other budget rules are an important framework through which Congress can make fiscally responsible investments in critical priorities and needed services throughout America while creating more equitable tax policy.

Resources to address human needs can also come from preventing wasteful uses of public funds, both in the United States and Iraq.

By making a down payment on the First Things First Agenda, the 110th Congress can renew our nation's moral commitment that every one deserves to live in dignity.

ECAP partners include the following national organizations:

<p>American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) ACORN Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA) American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) American Academy of HIV Medicine The Arc and UCP Disability Policy Collaboration Campaign for America's Future (CAF) Center for Community Change Children's Defense Fund Coalition on Human Needs Communications Workers of America (CWA) Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Direct Action Welfare Group (DAWG) Fair Taxes For All Coalition Families USA Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR) Mennonite Central Committee, Washington Office MoveOn.org Political Action National Association of Social Workers</p>	<p>National Community Action Foundation National Council of Churches National Council of Jewish Women National Gay and Lesbian Task Force National Head Start Association National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) National Women's Law Center (NWLC) OMB Watch People For the American Way (PFAW) Planned Parenthood Federation of America RESULTS Rural Americans for a Secure Future (RASf) Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Sierra Club United for a Fair Economy United States Student Association (USSA) USAction USPIRG Voices for Working Families Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)</p>
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