



## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTH CAROLINA

PO Box 8453, Columbia, SC, 29202, (803) 251-2726, [www.lwvsc.org](http://www.lwvsc.org)

The Honorable James E. Clyburn  
South Carolina-6th, Democrat  
2135 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515-4006

Dear Congressman Clyburn:

The SC League of Women Voters strongly encourages you to act quickly to reauthorize TANF funds. This action is needed soon to ensure that the SC Department of Social Services (DSS) has the funding it needs to serve the ever increasing numbers of South Carolina's vulnerable citizens who do not have a voice otherwise. Reauthorization is critical because of funding uncertainties, which may soon lead to major shortfalls – a deficit for DSS that could hit \$50 million. Waiting until 2011, or longer to reauthorize will have dire consequences.

In the past year, our state legislature reduced the DSS budget by more than \$48 million, drastically affecting all services for children and families. However, the number of children in Child Protective Services jumped from 9,170 in 2008 to 12,316 in 2009.

While South Carolinians may disagree in attitudes and opinions on various issues, we all share similar values.

One such value is that our children should live in a safe and healthy environment, nourished and cared for by loving adults. A second point on which most of us would agree is that when the adults with whom children live do not provide a safe and healthy environment, they must be moved to another environment that will provide these needed protections. Our General Assembly mandates that DSS provide that protective mission "to ensure the safety and health of children who cannot protect themselves." Providing protective and healing environments to children who have been traumatized for years costs money -- a third point on which most of us would agree.

As the national and state recessions have added additional levels of difficulty, DSS has seen a massive increase in demand for their services as families have lost jobs and health care coverage, but at the same time the funding for their mandated services have been cut. While DSS waits on your action, many of South Carolina's struggling families are being negatively impacted.

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina (LWVSC) urges you to act now! Be aware of this gaping hole in the state's protective safety net for children. Be aware that too many children will slip through this gaping hole while the debate continues on reauthorization. Many of these "too many" children will face bleak futures because they did not receive the help they needed from us.

Sincerely,

Barbara Zia, Ph.D.

President, LWVSC

*The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages.*