

CLIENT UPDATE

Fall 2007

Message from NLADA Client Policy Group Chair Rosita Stanley

I am proud to greet you as the outgoing chairperson of the NLADA Client Policy Group. It has been an honor and a pleasure to represent our interests at NLADA and within the larger equal justice community. We are important and essential partners in the collaborative efforts to produce a society built on fairness, equality, dignity and justice. This ongoing battle requires all of us to be advocates, ambassadors and gatekeepers for justice. I will remain active in the activities of NLADA's governance and look to continue to serve as a resource for the committees of the Client Policy Group. Together we will continue to move our community forward to contribute and



Rosita Stanley

leadership development institute at NLADA that will fully develop the leadership potential of clients, board members, lawyers, paralegals, support staff, executive directors and chief defenders.

I am proud to announce that our Client Policy Group is creating a new committee called the Program Enhancement Committee that will have working groups looking at the quality of our civil legal services and public defender programs. Our work will support NLADA's continuing efforts to promote well-funded, high quality, client-centered, holistic civil legal services and public defender programs.

Together we can and will improve the quality of our lives and those of our family and friends. Community is more than a geographic place. It is a connection based on a common purpose and values that help us make a difference in each others' lives. Community means that we care about one another and love each other as human beings first. It requires us to value our assets and contributions regardless of title and position. I am proud to be part of the community, working for the community, and having impact in this community. We are community people – working together to produce equal justice for everyone regardless of income, class, race ethnicity or gender. ★

Rosita Stanley

achieve our common purpose.

We have made significant strides over the last few years to impact the development of policy and practices in both the civil and defender communities of the equal justice family of individuals, organizations and associations. Our impact on the new ABA Standards for the Provision of Civil Legal Aid and the modification of LSC Regulation 1621 cannot be understated. We have worked with NLADA staff and leadership to expand the voice of low-income people and communities.

Our efforts to increase the leadership development opportunities for clients have produced fruit on many levels. We have been full participants and equal partners at the leadership development conferences of NLADA. We continue to be full partners in the development of a holistic

INSIDE

- 3** From Poverty to Prosperity: A National Strategy to Cut Poverty in Half
- 4** Five Equal Justice Heroes Slated to Receive NLADA Awards
- 7** 2007 NLADA Election Results
- 8** Dullems Commission Report Update

"We refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt."

Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Message from Client Section Chair Harry Johnson

The Client Section of NLADA is entering its seventh year of supporting the client community of the equal justice community. We look forward to many more years of working with clients all over the country.

I also want to welcome clients from around the country who are headed to the NLADA Annual Conference in Tucson, Arizona. The NLADA Annual Conference will be held at the Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa from November 7-10, 2007. We hope you are able to join us for the Client Policy Group meeting scheduled for Tuesday, November 6 at 8:00 a.m. The Client Section is scheduled to meet on November 8, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible and hope our turnout is as good as last year's in Charlotte, North Carolina.

We continue to appeal to all of our NLADA Client Individual Members to encourage their programs to enroll all of their client board members as members of NLADA. The membership dues are \$15.00 dollars annually. NLADA dues paying members are eligible to run for positions on the Client Policy Group, Civil Policy Group, Defender Policy Group and board of directors. We are working to increase membership in order to maximize the full representation of clients throughout the legal services and public defender communities. We are no longer in the fish bowl – we are in the ocean.

This year's Annual Conference theme "Leading the Way Toward Justice & Equality" will give the entire legal services community an opportunity to work in concert in a meaningful way to

NLADA Client Policy Group Officers 2007

Rosita Stanley

Chair

Macon, GA

Gloria C. Beaver

Winnsboro, SC

Myrnairis Cepeda

Roxbury, MA

Darryl Hunt

*The Darryl Hunt Foundation
for Freedom and Justice*

Winston-Salem, NC

Freddie Lee Pitts

Miami Shores, FL

help eliminate poverty in our communities. We will have many sessions connected to this year's theme.

I look forward to seeing all of the clients and other members of the NLADA family in Tucson, Arizona at our Annual Conference. ★

Message from NOCA President Lucille Logan

I am looking forward to meeting with you, the clients, at the Annual Conference in Tucson, Arizona. We will be meeting Wednesday, November 7, 2007 from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. at the Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa.

We will be asking for volunteers to work on committees and if you wish to be on a committee please make it known at the National Organization of Client Advocates (NOCA) annual meeting.

It is very important for us to look at our organization, know what this organization stands for, and know the NOCA mission.

“Our mission is to work for and with low-income and no-income people to secure their legal and human rights and to improve the quality of their lives by providing education, training and technical assistance thereby creating attitudes of self-reliance and the capacity for self-help.”

We need to be prepared to work. We need your input. These committees need to be all-inclusive as we all have a stake in our organization and in including as many persons as possible to create organizational vitality. Let's make diversity our strength, and we will have a strong client organization.

We need to stop looking for handouts, but start looking for a hand up. We can become self sufficient if we stop treating this organization as a committee but a business.

I'd like to thank all of the clients who voted for me as an individual client for the Civil Policy Group. I am your voice, so please keep me informed as to what your concerns are. Many times we as representatives forget who we represent. So thanks again for putting your trust in me to represent you. ★

From Poverty to Prosperity

A National Strategy to Cut Poverty in Half

Reprinted with permission from the Center for American Progress

Editor's Note: In 2006, the Center for American Progress convened a diverse group of national experts and leaders to examine the causes and consequences of poverty in America and make recommendations for national action. In its report released earlier this year, "From Poverty to Prosperity: A National Strategy to Cut Poverty in Half," the Task Force calls for a national goal of cutting poverty in half in the next 10 years and proposes a strategy to reach the goal.

Thirty-seven million Americans live below the official poverty line. Millions more struggle each month to pay for basic necessities or run out of savings when they lose their jobs or face health emergencies. This report makes clear how poverty imposes an enormous burden on individuals and our society, and gives advocates and client communities policies to come together around to tackle the persistent problems of poverty.

Executive Summary

Thirty-seven million Americans live below the official poverty line. Millions more struggle each month to pay for basic necessities, or run out of savings when they lose their jobs or face health emergencies. Poverty imposes enormous costs on society. The lost potential of children raised in poor households, the lower productivity and earnings of poor adults, the poor health, increased crime, and broken neighborhoods all hurt our nation. Persistent childhood poverty is estimated to cost our nation \$500 billion each year, or about 4 percent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product. In a world of increasing global competition, we cannot afford to squander these human resources.

The Center for American Progress last year convened a diverse group of national experts and leaders to examine the causes and consequences of poverty in America and make recommendations for national action. In this report, our Task Force on Poverty calls for a national goal of cutting poverty in half in the next 10 years and proposes a strategy to reach the goal.

Our nation has seen periods of dramatic poverty reduction at times when near-full employment was combined with sound federal and state policies, motivated individual initiative, supportive civic involvement, and sustained national commitment. In the last six years, however, our nation has moved in the opposite

direction. The number of poor Americans has grown by five million, while inequality has reached historic high levels.

Consider the following facts:

- **One in eight Americans now lives in poverty.** A family of four is considered poor if the family's income is below \$19,971—a bar far below what most people believe a family needs to get by. Still, using this measure, 12.6 percent of all Americans were poor in 2005, and more than 90 million people (31 percent of all Americans) had incomes below 200 percent of federal poverty thresholds.
- **Millions of Americans will spend at least one year in poverty at some point in their lives.** One third of all Americans will experience poverty within a 13-year period. In that period, one in 10 Americans are poor for most of the time, and one in 20 are poor for 10 or more years.
- **Poverty in the United States is far higher than in many other developed nations.** At the turn of the 21st century, the United States ranked 24th among 25 countries when measuring the share of the population below 50 percent of median income.
- **Inequality has reached record highs.** The richest one percent of Americans in 2005 had the largest share of the nation's income (19 percent) since 1929. At the same time, the poorest 20

NOCA Officers

Lucille Logan
President
Oklahoma City, OK

Charlie Morris
1st Vice President
Memphis, TN

Mollie Gomez
2nd Vice President
Norwalk, CA

Yvette Long
Secretary
Philadelphia, PA

Lucinda Henderson
Parliamentarian
Santa Ana, CA

Secret Henderson
Membership Committee Chair
Houston, TX

Pearly Blunt
Issues Committee Chairperson
Houston, TX

Harry Johnson
Treasurer
Indianapolis, IN

percent of Americans had only 3.4 percent of the nation's income.

It does not have to be this way. Our nation need not tolerate persistent poverty alongside great wealth.

The United States should set a national goal of cutting poverty in half over the next 10 years. A strategy to cut poverty in half should be guided by four principles:

- **Promote Decent Work.** People should work and work should pay enough to ensure that workers and their families can avoid poverty, meet basic needs and save for the future.
- **Provide Opportunity for All.** Children should grow up in conditions that maximize their opportunities for success; adults should have opportunities throughout their lives to connect to

See Poverty – Page 6

Five Equal Justice Heroes Slated to Receive Honors at 2007 NLADA Annual Conference in Tucson, Ariz

The National Legal Aid & Defender Association (NLADA) is pleased to announce that it will honor five equal justice champions at the NLADA 2007 Annual Conference Awards Luncheon on Friday, November 10 at the Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa in Tucson, AZ. The awards to be presented include the Charles Dorsey Award, the Reginald Heber Smith Award, the Mary Ellen Hamilton Award and the Clara Shortridge Foltz Award.

Charles Dorsey Award

The 2007 recipient of the Charles Dorsey Award is Stuart Andrews of Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP. The Charles Dorsey Award is given biennially to an individual who has provided extraordinary and dedicated service to the equal justice community and to organizations that promote expanding and improving access to justice for low-income people. To be eligible to receive this award, an individual must



Stuart Andrews

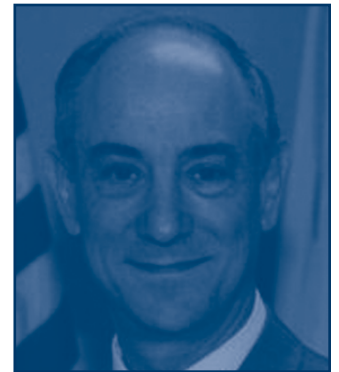
have demonstrated a commitment to equal justice for all through service as an officer, board or committee member of a national or statewide organization devoted to fulfilling the promise of equal justice.

Andrews practices law in Columbia, SC and leads Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP's South Carolina Health Care Group. Having been selected for inclusion in The Best Lawyers of America (1995-2008 editions) for his practice in health law, he represents hospitals, health systems, physicians, and ancillary providers in a wide range of regulatory and litigation matters. Andrews has served on numerous statewide task forces responsible for the development of recommendations concerning health care policy in South Carolina. A leader in philanthropic and civic affairs, he received the South Carolina Bar Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year Award in 2005. He has served as chairman of numerous organizations and initiatives, including South Carolina Legal Services, Applesseed Legal Justice Center, the South Carolina State Board of Education, the American Red Cross, South Carolina Blood Services Region, Columbia Academy, the South Carolina Access to Justice Task Force and Nelson

Mullins' nationally recognized Pro Bono Program. Prior to joining Nelson Mullins, Andrews was a staff attorney with Palmetto Legal Services and executive director of the South Carolina Legal Services Association.

Clara Shortridge Foltz Award

The 2007 recipient of the Clara Shortridge Foltz Award is Public Defender Bennett H. Brummer and the Public Defender's Office of the 11th Judicial Circuit of Florida (PD-11). The Clara Shortridge Foltz Award commends a public defender program or defense delivery system for outstanding achievement in the provision of indigent defense services. The achievement may be the result of an effort by the entire program, a division or branch or a special project. This award was named for the founder of the nation's public defender system. Foltz, California's first woman lawyer introduced the "Foltz Defender Bill" at the Congress of Jurisprudence and Law Reform in Chicago in 1893.



Bennett H. Brummer

Despite inadequate funding and limited resources, PD-11 is widely known for its exceptional work on behalf of indigent clients, extensive community involvement and proactive legal reform efforts. Through the years, PD-11 has faced tremendous budgetary challenges, won major legal battles, and developed a world-class public defender office in the process. PD-11's attorney training program is considered one of the best in the nation, with its heavy emphasis on trial advocacy and personal development. Led by Bennett H. Brummer, who has been the public defender since 1977, it is the largest criminal defense law firm in Florida. Brummer's leadership in providing quality defense to indigent clients is best exemplified by his determination in 1989 to force the government to address excessive caseloads that had resulted from years of inadequate funding for Florida's public defender offices. In the face of overwhelmingly negative publicity, he took the politically unpopular position of withdrawing from thousands of cases until local officials finally agreed to fund additional public defender attorneys.

Mary Ellen Hamilton Award

Awarded biennially, the Mary Ellen Hamilton Award honors clients who, on a compensated or volunteer basis, have provided extraordinary service or support to the delivery of legal services to the poor. The award honors one of the founders of the National Clients Council and the Alliance for Legal Rights. Mary Ellen Hamilton served on NLADA's board of directors and remained an active member of the Alliance until her death in 1985.

This year's first recipient of the Mary Ellen Hamilton Award is Amelia Nieto, board member of the Legal Aid Foundation (LAFLA) of Los Angeles and director of Centro Shalom. A board member of LAFLA since 1999, she previously sat on the board of the Legal Aid Foundation of Long Beach until the two programs merged. She is known as an exceptionally active and vocal board member. She has a wide-spread and distinguished repu-



Amelia Nieto

tation among the region's poorest residents and a deep commitment to the low-income community. Nieto's familiarity with current client issues comes largely from her responsibility in directing Centro Shalom, a grassroots organization in Long Beach. In a small office with a team of community volunteers, she operates Centro Shalom as an urban "campesino center," a concept she learned as a United Farm Workers staffer. Her office assists some 1,200 documented and undocumented people a month, confronting hunger, eviction, family problems and immigration issues.

The second recipient of the Mary Ellen Hamilton Award is Ethel "Peggy" Santos, board member for the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (MLAC). Santos has been involved in social justice activities for more than 35 years and more than 25 years with legal services activities. She was instrumental in creating the MLAC client steering committee and helped to design the steering committee training manual. She has testified



Peggy Santos

before the LSC board of directors on client issues and works with community organizations in collaboration with legal services programs on issues that impact the quality of life for low-income people. As a board member for the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI), Santos served as a persistent voice for advocacy through many different forums and strate-

gies. She not only pressed for low-income people to have access to attorneys, she was also a strong voice for client empowerment. She pushed legal services to provide trainings for and with low-income people. She urged the production of more community level education and personally distributed these materials. At the national level, she played an important role in making sure clients were involved in shaping legal services' priorities and protecting legal services from attacks.

Reginald Heber Smith Award

The 2007 recipient of the Reginald Heber Smith Award is Rau "Mona" Tawatao, regional counsel with Legal Services of Northern California (LSNC). The Reginald Heber Smith Award recognizes the dedicated service and outstanding achievements of a civil legal aid attorney or indigent defense attorney while employed by an organization supporting such services. The "Reggie" is named for a former counsel at the Boston Legal Aid Society and the author of *Justice and the Poor*, published by the Carnegie Foundation in 1919.



Mona Tawatao

As an advocate for legal services, Tawatao has developed a national reputation for her groundbreaking advocacy on housing preservation and race equity initiatives. In 2003, Tawatao was the moving force responsible for convening a legal services retreat on race equity advocacy. Using the latest data, social science theory, as well as nuts and bolts advocacy tools, she challenged LSNC staff and the broader public interest community to assess all substantive work as a vehicle to close the opportunity gaps which divide our communities along racial lines. To her clients she is a trusted voice and resource. She also understands that for a community organizing effort to be successful, it must rest squarely on the shoulders of her clients. The decisions and responsibility must be their own.

"These five individuals strive every day to make a difference in the lives of people in need," said NLADA President & CEO Jo-Ann Wallace. "They have proactively stepped forward to create systems and programs that both benefit the low-income community and engage them in the delivery of services. Whether it is by acting as legal counsel; helping to secure positive and fair change in the laws and policies of our local, state and federal governments; or acting as advocate and a steadfast ally to those without the ability to protect themselves, Stuart, Mona, Amelia, Peggy, and Bennett and the Public Defender's Office of the 11th Judicial Circuit of Florida are true champions for equal justice. They fight each day, with great success, to ensure that the promise of fair and equal justice is available to everyone today." ★

Poverty – Continued From Page 3

work, get more education, live in a good neighborhood and move up in the workforce.

- **Ensure Economic Security.** Americans should not fall into poverty when they cannot work or work is unavailable, unstable, or pays so little that they cannot make ends meet.
- **Help People Build Wealth.** All Americans should have the opportunity to build assets that allow them to weather periods of flux and volatility, and to have the resources that may be essential to advancement and upward mobility.

We recommend 12 key steps to cut poverty in half:

1. **Raise and index the minimum wage to half the average hourly wage.** At \$5.15, the federal minimum wage is at its lowest level in real terms since 1956. The federal minimum wage was once 50 percent of the average wage but is now 30 percent of that wage. Congress should restore the minimum wage to 50 percent of the average wage, about \$8.40 an hour in 2006. Doing so would help over 4.5 million poor workers and nearly nine million other low-income workers.
2. **Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit.** As an earnings supplement for low-income working families, the EITC raises incomes and helps families build assets. EITC expansions during the 1990s helped increase employment and reduced poverty. But the current EITC does little to help workers without children. We recommend tripling the EITC for childless workers, and expanding help to larger working families. Doing so would cut the number of people in poverty by over two million. The Child Tax Credit provides a tax credit of up to \$1,000 per child, but provides no help to the poorest families. We recommend making it available to all low- and moderate-income families. Doing so would move two million children and one million parents out of poverty.
3. **Promote unionization by enacting the Employee Free Choice Act.** The Employee Free Choice Act would require employers to recognize a union after a majority of workers signs cards authorizing union representation and establish stronger penalties for violation of employee rights. The increased union representation made possible by the Act would lead to better jobs and less poverty for American workers.
4. **Guarantee child care assistance to low-income families and promote early education for all.** We propose that the federal and state governments guarantee child care help to families with incomes below about \$40,000 a year, and also expand the child care tax credit. At the same time, states should be encouraged to improve the quality of early education and broaden access for all children. Our child care expansion would raise employment among low-income parents and help nearly three million parents and children escape poverty.
5. **Create two million new “opportunity” housing vouchers, and promote equitable development in and around central cities.** Nearly 8 million Americans live in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty where at least 40 percent of residents are poor. Our nation should seek to end concentrated poverty and economic segregation, and promote regional equity and inner-city revitalization. We propose that over the next 10 years the federal government fund two million new “opportunity vouchers” designed to help people live in opportunity-rich areas. New affordable housing should be in communities with employment opportunities and high-quality public services, or in gentrifying communities. These housing policies should be part of a broader effort to pursue equitable development strategies in regional and local planning efforts, including efforts to improve schools, create affordable housing, assure physical security, and enhance neighborhood amenities.
6. **Connect disadvantaged and disconnected youth with school and work.** About 1.7 million poor youth ages 16 to 24 were out of school and out of work in 2005. We recommend that the federal government restore Youth Opportunity Grants to help the most disadvantaged communities and expand funding for effective and promising youth programs—with the goal of reaching 600,000 poor disadvantaged youth through these efforts. We propose a new Upward Pathway program to offer low-income youth opportunities to participate in service and training in fields that are in high-demand and provide needed public services.
7. **Simplify and expand Pell Grants and make higher education accessible to residents of each state.** Low-income youth are much less likely to attend college than their higher income peers, even among those of comparable abilities. Pell Grants play a crucial role for lower-income students. We propose to simplify the Pell grant application process, gradually raise Pell Grants to reach 70 percent of the average costs of attending a four-year public institution, and encourage institutions to do more to raise student completion rates. As the federal government does its part, states should develop strategies to make post-secondary education affordable for all residents, following promising models already underway in a number of states.
8. **Help former prisoners find stable employment and reintegrate into their communities.** The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world. We urge all states to develop comprehensive reentry services aimed at reintegrating former prisoners into their communities with full-time, consistent employment.
9. **Ensure equity for low-wage workers in the Unemployment Insurance system.** Only about 35 percent of the unemployed, and a smaller share of unemployed low-wage workers, receive unemployment insurance benefits. We recommend that states (with federal help) reform “monetary eligibility” rules that screen out low-wage workers, broaden eligibility for part-time workers and workers who have lost employment as a result of compelling family circumstances, and allow unemployed workers to use periods of unemployment as a time to upgrade their skills and qualifications.
10. **Modernize means-tested benefits programs to develop a**

coordinated system that helps workers and families. A well-functioning safety net should help people get into or return to work and ensure a decent level of living for those who cannot work or are temporarily between jobs. Our current system fails to do so. We recommend that governments at all levels simplify and improve benefits access for working families and improve services to individuals with disabilities. The Food Stamp Program should be strengthened to improve benefits, eligibility, and access. And the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program should be reformed to shift its focus from cutting caseloads to helping needy families find sustainable employment.

11. Reduce the high costs of being poor and increase access to financial services. Despite having less income, lower-income families often pay more than middle and high-income families for the same consumer products. We recommend that the federal and state governments should address the foreclosure crisis through expanded mortgage assistance programs and by new federal legislation to curb unscrupulous practices. And we propose that the federal government establish a \$50 million Financial Fairness Innovation Fund to support state efforts to broaden access to mainstream goods and financial services in predominantly low-income communities.

12. Expand and simplify the Saver's Credit to encourage saving for education, homeownership and retirement. For many families, saving for purposes such as education, a home, or a small business is key to making economic progress. We propose that the federal "Saver's Credit" be reformed to make it fully refundable. This Credit should also be broadened to apply to other appropriate savings vehicles intended to foster asset accumulation, with consideration given to including individual development accounts, children's saving accounts, and college savings plans.

We believe our recommendations will cut poverty in half.

The Urban Institute, which modeled the implementation of one set of our recommendations, estimates that four of our steps would reduce poverty by 26 percent, bringing us more than halfway toward our goal. Among their findings:

- **Taken together, our minimum wage, EITC, child credit, and child care recommendations would reduce poverty by 26 percent.** This would mean over nine million fewer people in poverty and a national poverty rate of 9.1 percent—the lowest in recorded U.S. history.

2007 NLADA Board, Policy Group Election Results

Elected to the NLADA Board of Directors: Lillian Johnson, Phoenix, AZ, to civil program seat until 2010; Maria Soto, Miami, FL, to civil individual seat until 2010; Nicholas Chiarkas, Madison, WI, to the defender program seat until 2010; Alex Gulotta, Charlottesville, VA, public-at-large (individual) seat until 2010.

Elected to the Civil Policy Group: Catherine Carr, Philadelphia, PA, to the chief staff officer (region II) seat until 2010; Jonathan Asher, Denver, CO, to the chief staff officer (region V) until 2010; Thomas Mlakar, Cleveland, OH, to the

- **The racial poverty gap would be narrowed.** White poverty would fall from 8.7 percent to 7 percent. Poverty among African Americans would fall from 21.4 percent to 15.6 percent. Hispanic poverty would fall from 21.4 percent to 12.9 percent and poverty for all others would fall from 12.7 percent to 10.3 percent.
- **Child poverty and extreme poverty would both fall.** Child poverty would drop by 41 percent. The number of people in extreme poverty would fall by over two million.
- **Millions of low- and moderate-income families would benefit.** Almost half of the benefits would help low- and moderate-income families.

That these recommendations would reduce poverty by more than one quarter is powerful evidence that a 50 percent reduction can be reached within a decade.

The combined cost of our principal recommendations is in the range of \$90 billion a year—a significant cost but one that is necessary and could be readily funded through a fairer tax system. An additional \$90 billion in annual spending would represent about 0.8 percent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product, which is a fraction of the money spent on tax changes that benefited primarily the wealthy in recent years. Consider that:

- The current annual costs of the tax cuts enacted by Congress in 2001 and 2003 are in the range of \$400 billion a year.
- In 2008 alone the value of the tax cuts to households with incomes exceeding \$200,000 a year is projected to be \$100 billion.

Our recommendations could be fully paid for simply by bringing better balance to the federal tax system and recouping part of what has been lost by the excessive tax cuts of recent years. We recognize that serious action has serious costs, but the challenge before the nation is not whether we can afford to act, but rather that we must decide to act.

The Next Steps

In 2009, we will have a new president and a new Congress. Across the nation, there is a yearning for a shared national commitment to build a better, fairer, more prosperous country, with opportunity for all. In communities across the nation, policymakers, business people, people of faith, and concerned citizens are coming together. Our commitment to the common good compels us to move forward. ★

staff representative (regions I & II) seat until 2010; Linda Zazove, East St. Louis, IL; staff representative (regions III & IV) until 2010; Gwendolyn Hanley-Pamplin, San Diego, CA, to the client representative (regions V & VI) seat until 2010; Lucille Logan, Oklahoma City, OK, to the individual client representative seat until 2010.

Elected to the Defender Policy Group: Edwin Burnette, Chicago, IL, chief defender or director of defender program seat until 2010; Anthony Carter, Covington, GA, defender staff seat until 2010. ★

Dellums Commission Report Provides Plan of Action for Improving Opportunities for Young Men of Color

By Kate Lang, NLADA associate attorney for Civil Legal Services

The Dellums Commission, chaired by former Congressman and current Oakland, Calif. Mayor Ronald V. Dellums, was formed by the Health Policy Institute of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies to analyze policies that affect the physical, emotional and social health of young men of color and their communities and to develop an action plan to alter public policies that limit life paths for young men of color.

The final report of the commission, *A Way Out: Creating Partners for Our Nation's Prosperity by Expanding Life Paths of Young Men of Color*, captures the key points of several detailed background papers that are available through the Joint Center Health Policy Institute. The commission analyzed national, state and local policies in the areas of health and mental health services, education, juvenile justice and criminal justice, family support and child welfare, and the media.

The diminished life options and outcomes that young men of color can expect in today's America are not natural phenomena. The Dellums Commission's investigations of policies affecting youth of color uncovered a series of decisions that,

over the past 30 years, shaped the society in which minority youth develop. Some public policies have injured or failed young men of color because policymakers did not accurately anticipate how they would affect minority youth. Other policies, particularly in the criminal justice context, demonstrate a deliberate scapegoating of young men of color.

The Dellums Commission examined the impact of a wide array of policies in an attempt to guarantee that neither ignorance nor malice is allowed to govern decision making in the future. Its recommended solutions could serve to replace or to reform laws, policies and practices that are endangering an increasingly large portion of the minority youth population.

The commission's effort has focused on the male population, not to diminish the crisis faced by women, but to recognize the disproportionate and unfair burden that young men of color carry and its far-reaching implications for family and community health. We must face the costs, in life and health, that so many of America's young men have paid and that ultimately, our society pays as well. ★

View the the report at www.jointcenter.org/publications1/publication-PDFs/Dellums%20PDFs/FinalReport.pdf



National Legal Aid & Defender Association

1140 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 900

Washington, DC 20036-4019

T: (202) 452-0620 • F: (202) 872-1031 • Web site: www.nlada.org