February 18, 2011

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Mr. President:

As members of the Boston Delegation, we are writing to express our deep concern about the potential funding cuts in Community Services Block Grants (CSBG) that were included in the Administration’s budget request for Fiscal Year 2012. While we understand that the improvement of our nation’s budgetary outlook will require difficult choices, we believe that cutting CSBGs, which are the source of funding for community action programs, will hinder, rather than help, our nation’s economic recovery. Accordingly, we respectfully request that the Administration leave intact funding levels for CSBGs.

As you know, community action programs are the federal government’s only comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of vulnerable citizens and helping struggling Americans get the services they need to achieve economic security. Covering 1,065 agencies in 99 percent of U.S. counties, community action programs last year provided critical supports such as employment, education and housing to 20.7 million Americans facing an array of enormous challenges ranging from extreme poverty, disability, and lack of employment.

In Massachusetts, we have seen firsthand the incredible positive impact of Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD), a widely respected community services program founded in 1962. ABCD makes a difference every day for 80,000 individuals and their families in the Commonwealth every year. ABCD has a network of neighborhood offices, Head Start centers, Family Planning sites, and Fuel Assistance locations, helping residents get back on their feet, find jobs and pay taxes. Moreover, every CSBG dollar is multiplied 20 times over in private and public funds raised to support community programs and meet needs. As winter storms continue to bear down on our state and the New England region, ABCD is helping more than 26,000 low-income families survive a bitter winter with its Fuel Assistance program, launching the Earned Income Tax Credit campaign that will help nearly 10,000 working poor families
access up to $6,500 each in tax credits, providing Head Start and child care services for 2,400 children and their families, and beginning recruitment for 5,000 inner-city youth for the agency’s summer jobs and education program.

We believe that CSBG-funded projects will help our country "win the future" by ensuring that all Americans achieve economic security and become productive, contributing members of society. We appreciate your consideration of our request to preserve CSBG funding in your Administration’s FY12 budget proposal and stand ready to work with you as we confront the challenges facing our nation in the future.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Senator Steven A. Tolman
2nd Suffolk and Middlesex

Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz
2nd Suffolk

Senator Sal N. DiDomenico
Middlesex, Suffolk and Essex

Senator Anthony Petruccelli
1st Suffolk and Middlesex

John T. Regan*
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Office of State Senator Mike Rush
Suffolk and Norfolk District

Representative Nick Collins
4th Suffolk

Representative Carlo P. Basile
1st Suffolk

Representative Edward F. Coppinger
10th Suffolk

*As authorized by Senator Mike Rush who is currently on active military duty.
Representative Linda Dorcena Forry  
12th Suffolk

Representative Carlos Tony Henniquez  
5th Suffolk

Representative Russell E. Holmes  
6th Suffolk

Representative Kevin G. Honan  
17th Suffolk

Representative Elizabeth A. Malia  
11th Suffolk

Representative Aaron M. Michlewitz  
3rd Suffolk

Representative Michael J. Moran  
18th Suffolk

Representative Eugene L. O'Flaherty  
2nd Suffolk

Representative Byron Rushing  
9th Suffolk

Representative Jeffrey Sanchez  
15th Suffolk

Representative Martin J. Walsh  
13th Suffolk

Representative Martha M. Walz  
8th Suffolk

Representative Angelo M. Scaccia  
14th Suffolk