

April 27, 2007

The Honorable Eliot Spitzer  
Governor  
State of New York  
State Capitol  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Spitzer:

We are writing to ask you to take immediate action to reverse a Pataki-era welfare policy that denies federal disability benefits to over a thousand disabled children in low-income households that receive the AIDS emergency shelter allowance.

About 1100 New York families living on survival-level public assistance benefits lose approximately \$573 per month under this harsh policy.

Although the issue was under discussion during this year's budget talks, budget bills so far have not included language to change the policy and restore the benefits.

As advocates for people living with HIV/AIDS, people with additional or other disabilities, and for low-income New York families we are hopeful that your administration will work to improve a range of HIV/AIDS, anti-poverty and disability policies.

We've been encouraged by many of the steps you've taken in your first months in office, including initiatives to protect tenants in AIDS supportive housing and to restore proper budgeting for many households receiving state public assistance and federal SSI benefits.

But we are very concerned that the needs of these vulnerable families struggling with AIDS and disabled children have not yet been addressed.

We urge you to take the necessary steps now to change state policy on AIDS SSI invisibility and allow these families and children to receive the full amount of federal disability benefits to which they are entitled.

Yours very truly,

## **AIDS GROUPS**

AIDS Center of Queens County, Inc.

AIDS Community Research Initiative of America

Action for a Better Community/Action Front Center

African Services Committee

Bailey House

Binghamton Tri-County HIV Care Network

FACES NY (formerly Minority Task Force on AIDS)

Gay Men's Health Crisis

Health People: Community Preventive Health Institute

Housing Works

Latino Commission on AIDS

The Momentum Project

National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS

New York AIDS Coalition

New York City AIDS Housing Network

Sisterhood Mobilized for AIDS/HIV Research and Treatment  
(SMART)

Rochester Area Task Force on AIDS

Women with HIV/AIDS Advocating and Mobilizing (WHAAM)

## **LEGAL SERVICES / CIVIL RIGHTS GROUPS**

Empire Justice Center

Empire State Pride Agenda

Grey Panthers, New York City Network

The HIV Law Project

The Legal Aid Society

Legal Action Center -- Women's Initiative to Stop HIV  
(WISH-NY)

## **DISABILITY GROUPS**

504 Democratic Club

Center for Disability Rights

Center for Independence of the Disabled in New York (CIDNY)

Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State

Disabilities Network of NYC

Disabled in Action of Metropolitan New York

Harlem Independent Living Center

New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services

New York Association on Independent Living

New York State ADAPT

New York State Independent Living Council

**HEALTH, ANTIPOVERTY & CHILDREN'S GROUPS**

American Academy of Pediatrics District II NYS

Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health Center

Children's Defense Fund - New York

The Coalition of Behavioral Health Agencies, Inc.

Coalition for the Homeless

Health and Welfare Council of Long Island

New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness

New York State Episcopal Public Policy Network

cc: The Honorable Sheldon Silver

The Honorable Joseph Bruno