











Empire Justice Center 2009-11 Legislative Agenda Scorecard (current as of 8/4/09)

| BUDGET RELATED ITEMS: | Status | Notes |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Maintain and increase state funding for Civil Legal Services to at least the 2007 funding level to ensure that the state’s fiscal difficulties do not impede access to justice for low income New Yorkers at the very time the need for these essential services is on the rise.</p> |  | <p>2008-09 Funding level maintained. Senate provides new funding for the first time in New York State history – although level of funding remains unclear. Efforts to “get the money out the door” continue. Detailed article.</p> |
| <p>Maintain and increase New York’s investment in the Disability Advocacy Program (DAP) – each dollar invested generates two to three dollars in savings for the state by securing federal SSI benefits for low income disabled New Yorkers and pays state and local governments back for any welfare benefits received while recipients waited for approval.</p> |  | <p>2008-09 base funding level maintained, but at reduced level. TANF funding maintained at \$1 million. Efforts to secure stimulus funds for DAP continue.</p> |
| <p>Work defensively to ensure that the state fiscal crisis does not result in a reduction of critical services for poor and low income and out of work New Yorkers when they are in need of assistance. This includes public and disability assistance, health and pharmaceutical coverage, housing and other essential programs and services.</p> |  | <p>Empire Justice staff and colleagues worked hard to maintain benefits and services for low income New Yorkers. See detailed articles on: Child care, Pharmaceutical, Civil legal services</p> |
| <p>Secure a long overdue increase in the welfare grant—as New Yorkers face difficult times, more individuals and families are likely to need public assistance, making it even more important that the grant level is increased to a level that can sustain those who need it, including relative care givers.</p> |  | <p>Increase included in Executive Budget. Detailed Article</p> |
| <p>Maintain and improve Access to Child Care Across New York—support working parents in these dire economic circumstances and keep children in high quality child care by restoring funding to 2004-05 level and standardizing benefits across counties.</p> |  | <p>Some funding restored and proposal to block grant child care funding was averted. Detailed Article</p> |

Legislative Agenda Scorecard—continued

| BUDGET RELATED ITEMS: | Status | Notes |
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| Expand Access to Medicaid and Family Health Plus —eliminate the Medicaid asset test & fingerprinting requirements. Raise the level of income eligibility for Family Health Plus. | ✓ | Accomplished, but with some exceptions. Detailed Article |
| Stop New York’s Low Income and Minority Children from being poisoned by lead —increase the funding levels and effectiveness of state and local primary prevention programs (including the availability of inspections), and improve the coordination of health, code-enforcement and social services programs to ensure that state funds are not used to pay for housing that is not lead safe. | ✓ | Funding for primary prevention programs was increased by \$2.5 million in Executive Budget and Governor’s Executive Order 21 created an Interagency Task Force to improve coordination between agencies. |
| Ensure assistance is available to lower income homeowners facing foreclosure —continue funding for legal services and housing counseling programs to serve homeowners in default on their mortgages in 2010, observe and improve the mandatory settlement conference process for homeowners in foreclosure proceedings to ensure the system is responsive to current foreclosure trends, and monitor legislation affecting tenants living in foreclosed properties. | ~ | An additional \$25 million was appropriated for the Subprime Foreclosure Prevention Services Program in the Budget using Federal stimulus dollars. The Governor developed a “Program Bill” that addressed multiple facets of the foreclosure process – the bill was amended and passed the Assembly. Detailed Article |
| Enact equitable ways to raise state revenues while protecting low income New Yorkers from being taxed disproportionately and ensure that the programs and services they need are not reduced at a time when they become even more critical. This includes enactment of a modest personal income tax increase on the wealthiest New Yorkers as recommended by the Fiscal Policy Institute. | ✓ | Through the Better Choice and ONE NY campaigns this goal was accomplished and substantial cuts to services were averted. Detailed Article |
| NON-BUDGET RELATED ITEMS: | | |
| Ensure that low income non-custodial parent’s responsibility for paying for medical coverage for their children, (including birthing costs) is fair and affordable. Individuals should not have to pay more than 5% of their income toward a child support medical order, and family court should recognize that parents under 160% of poverty are unable to pay medical child support. | ✓ | S.4214-B (Sampson)A.8977 (Weinstein) signed into law on 7/11/2009 chapter 215 Detailed Article Bill Text |

Legislative Agenda Scorecard—continued

| NON-BUDGET RELATED ITEMS: | Status | Notes |
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| <p>Protect the safety of domestic violence victims who are changing their names by protecting their confidentiality at every step in the process.</p> |  | <p>A. 3468(Scarborough)/ S.4334 (Kruger) signed into law on 07/07/2009 chapter 83 Detailed Article Bill Text</p> |
| <p>Increase Access to Education and Training for Public Assistance Recipients—in a period of job instability and increasing unemployment, New York must take the opportunity to strengthen its work force and invest in supports for low income families by expanding their access to education and job training.</p> |  | <p>While we did not accomplish our main goal of getting S.1827 (Wright)/ S5846 (Montgomery) passed, OTDA did promulgate regulations that will improve access to basic education. Detailed Article Bill Text</p> |
| <p>Require New York State to provide services to all New Yorkers equally, regardless of what language the recipient speaks.</p> |  | <p>While we did not accomplish our main goal of getting Medicaid Reimbursement for translation services passed (A.1827-A(Wright)/ S.05846-A (Montgomery) Detailed Article , OCFS and OTDA are in the process of releasing interagency guidance on Language Access. Detailed Article and a number of bills on the issue are pending Detailed Article</p> |
| <p>Ensure that all New Yorkers have access to quality, equitable homeowner’s insurance products, by requiring homeowner’s insurance companies to disclose information about cost and types of policies written based on geographic location.</p> |  | <p>Work continues on this effort. Report Released and another in process. Link to report: http://www.empirejustice.org/publications/reports/how-fair-is-new-yorks-fair.html</p> |
| <p>Protect consumer finances in a period of economic hardship—monitor trends in financial services for low and moderate income consumers and advocate for legislative and regulatory changes to protect the limited resources of New York families.</p> |  | <p>Work continues on this effort. Empire Justice staff worked with colleagues to raise awareness about abusive debt collection practices and continue to push for passage of A.7558-A (Weinstein)/S.4398-A (Schneiderman) and A.8840-B (Pheffer)/S.6036 (Perkins)</p> |