

LATE Testimony

Testimony

By

MaBel Ferreiro Fujiuchi

Chief Executive Officer

Kauai Economic Opportunity, Incorporated

On

SCR ,SDI Supporting the Community Services block Grant Program and strongly opposing Budget cuts
proposed by the President of the United States and members of the United States Congress

to the

House of Representatives

at the Hearing

on: Thursday

April 14,2011

10:00AM

Conference Room 329

Chair John M. Mizuno and members of the committee:

Kauai Economic Opportunity, Incorporated supports the Resolution being heard and ask for your support of this very important resolution.

The resolution provides all points to validate such a resolution and I've attached my letter to President Barack Obama to provide some information specific to Kauai Economic Opportunity, Incorporated.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

I hope you find merit in the support of this resolution.

Thank you for all your continued support and assistance towards eliminating poverty.

My best to all of you,


Mabel Ferreiro Fujuchi
Chief Executive Officer



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President Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

In my tenure at Kauai Economic Opportunity, Incorporated (KEO), a Community Action Agency, as a worker in several positions, I have seen many poor economically disadvantaged reach all levels of self-sufficiency, sustain themselves and obtain economical health and independence.

Over the past 40 years, I have witnessed several Presidents and Administrations – some who recognized the need of those less fortunate and others who unsuccessfully attempted to demolish the opportunities for the economically devastated by terminating Community Action Agencies and/or funding to such agencies devoted to assisting the poor. When you were elected President, recognizing what platform you presented, recognizing what I thought you represented, gave me comfort that at least for your term(s) of office, those less fortunate would continue accessibility to opportunities, that, in the past, we all struggled to successfully preserve.

Reviewing your Budget Message to the Congress of the United States on February 14, 2011, you stated that “an economy had been shrinking is beginning to grow again” and that “even as recovery begins to take hold, we have more work to do to live up to our promise by repairing the damage this brutal recession has inflicted on our people, generating millions of new jobs, and seizing the economic opportunities of this competitive new century.” I am so saddened and somewhat confused that by the theme you convey throughout your delivery conflicts with your proposed action to eliminate Community Action Programs funding by 50%! I’m further concerned that in your State of the Union Address, these programs that “invest” in the poor were singled out by you as a program to cut.

The amount you propose to cut is \$350 million is a minute amount out of the total \$79.9 Billion of the Department of Health and Human Services budget and an inconceivable speck in the total U.S. Government budget you propose of \$3.7 trillion. However, with your proposal, the weakest population group of our “at home in the United States” will suffer at least by 50%! Specifically, as a 45year old Community Action Agency we have within the past fiscal year applied for and received approximately less than \$300,000.00 in CSBG funds. We have served more than 5,000 poverty level individuals. We have been able to accomplish this because we applied for and received more than \$5,000,000.00 for programs and services needed by our participants. Our rate of return is at least \$17.00 of additional funds for each CSBG \$1.00 we received. We employ 70. The CSBG investment in our agency has exceeded many other Federal agencies and

*Alexander & Baldwin Foundation*Combined Federal Campaign*Community Services Block Grant*County of Kauai Housing Agency, Agency on Elderly Affairs*Dept. of Housing & Urban Development*Hawaii Community Foundation-May Templeton Hopper Fund*Bank of Hawaii Teresa F. Hughes Trust Estate,*State of Hawaii-Dept. of Human Services, Dept. of Health Alcohol & Drug Abuse Division, Dept. of Defense, Dept of Labor & Industrial Relations Office of Community Services, Hawaii Public Housing Authority, Judiciary *Office of Hawaiian Affairs*Hawaii Hotel Association Kauai Chapter*Hawaii Justice Foundation*Kauai United Way*KIUC Charitable Foundation*USDA*FEMA*Margaret Cargill Foundation*and other private funding sources.*



programs, as you may know – and that all equates to expanded services towards those in need. An agency brochure of Kauai Economic Opportunity, Incorporated has been enclosed to share the breath of Kauai Economic Opportunity, Incorporated. Removal of CSBG funds may demolish this in total.

When you were elected, I had hope and was somewhat “relieved” in that I firmly believed that your principles and the execution of your beliefs would extend to those most needy. I feel now I may have been mistaken in my belief. The Budget for fiscal year 2012 that you have presented to the Congress on February 14, 2011 has caused me to believe that you propose to take away a paltry amount of funding, as a part of an expansive budget, from the most vulnerable of all populations living here in the United States of America.

The Community Action Agencies, with CSBG funding, are the mandate to serve the poor exclusively. President Obama, please reconsider your proposal and help us provide the poor with basic needs and attain sustainability. Please do not take away the limited funding that may be available to assist those in need – as, when you are already “injured,” you may not be able to “scream” as much, however with the inflection of more injury, your hurt will deepen – sometimes unnoticed. President Obama, please do not surrender on the War on Poverty that Presidents Kennedy and Johnson initiated in 1965 through the Office of Economic Opportunity Act. Please do not turn the “War on Poverty” to the “War Against Those in Poverty”. At your press conference on, February 15, 2011, you were asked by a reporter why might you attempt to balance the budget by reducing funds to the poor by reductions such as the Community Services Block Grant, the PELL and the LIHEAP funds. You explained that you were simply removing funds that had increased the funding levels of PELL and LIHEAP in the past few years. You were silent on responding to the reason for CSBG reductions. I can almost understand, with reservation, (as these reductions will hurt the poor), perhaps removing gains in the past year or so of funding. However, to my knowledge, CSBG has not had an increase in its funding for the past several years.

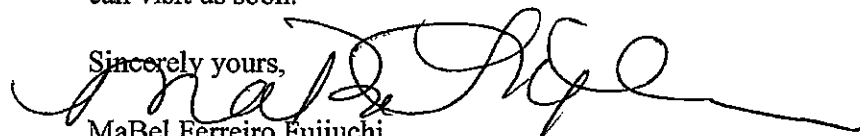
In your presentation of the 2012 Budget you indicate that cuts to CSBG are due to “nonaccountability.” As an administrator, I know the agency I represent is wholly accountable for its funds and services. As an administrator, I also feel that I am held accountable for funding, policies, procedures and delivery of services to those eligible and needy. In my high regard of you as the “Top Administrator” of the country, its actions and budget, I would hope that you would hold your designated administrator of the CSBG funds accountable, rather than deny services to those who need them, and, in essence, have no responsibility for accountability. Why must an eligible person and/or family be denied due to an entity’s or persons responsibility for accountability, if that, in fact, is the true reason?

I feel, in your heart you are deeply concerned about those in need and without opportunities and I ask you from the bottom of my heart: Please do not inflict more pain and injury to those in need, by removing what little there is. Please reconsider your budget proposal and increase the level of funding for this dire human need. In your delivery you state “momentum is building” – yes, I believe that and let’s share that momentum with the poor too!

Mr. President, please feel free to contact me should you have any questions and/or need further clarification. I can be reached by phone at (808)245-4077, by fax at (808)245-7476 and by e-mail at keo@keoinc.org. It would be an honor to hear from you. I would be so honored to sit and talk with you on this crucial issue.

I thank you for your consideration of my request and hope you can find a way to act favorably on such. From the island of Kauai, I send you and your family our warmest Aloha and hope you can visit us soon.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MaBel Ferreiro Fujiuchi', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

MaBel Ferreiro Fujiuchi
Chief Executive Officer