

Clearinghouse REVIEW

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March–April 2008

Volume 41, Numbers 11–12

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Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law

Clearinghouse REVIEW

Published by the
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
50 E. Washington St. Suite 500, Chicago, IL 60602
312.263.3830, Fax 312.263.3846
admin@povertylaw.org, www.povertylaw.org

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Letter from the Editor

The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law's recently released *Poverty Scorecard 2007: Rating Members of Congress* graded each member of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives according to his or her voting record on the most significant poverty-related legislation (on affordable housing, health care, education, labor, tax policy, and immigrants' rights) that came to a vote last year. During the teleconference release of the scorecard, Shriver Center President John Bouman commented: "Thirty-seven million Americans live in the State of Poverty, the largest state in the nation. This number can be substantially reduced only if your nation's political leadership—the President and Congress—takes aggressive action to address the complex, structural causes of poverty." Various policy ideas for leading the way out of the State of Poverty and action that advocates can take on both the federal and state levels are described by the Shriver Center in its 2008 National Agenda (see www.povertylaw.org homepage). These policy ideas are also the basis of a special CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW issue later this year. One policy idea—advancing low-wage workers by making work pay—is an underlying premise for the lead article in this issue: "Improving Work Supports: Using the Family Resource Simulator to Identify Problems and Test Solutions" by Bouman, Kinsey Alden Dinan, and Nancy K. Cauthen.

Contributing to the national public policy debate about ending poverty during this presidential election season can be invigorating and lend promise to greater attention to this mission. Still, tackling the root structural causes of poverty is not likely to succeed without affirmative and complex advocacy by lawyers committed to this work. Some legal aid advocates are concerned about a marked decrease in this type of advocacy; at the same time emerging young legal aid leaders are eager to step up and do this advocacy yet face obstacles to doing so. Consider the perspectives on leadership and affirmative advocacy of the young fellows of the Center for Legal Aid Education leadership institute and Ross Dolloff, director of training at the Center for Legal Aid Education. What do you think? What should the legal aid community do? The authors and other readers look forward to your comments and questions in an online discussion moderated by the authors (for details see page 628). To thank the fellows of the leadership institute for their contribution to the REVIEW and to support their work with useful practical information on key legal strategies and developments relevant to lawyers committed to ending poverty, each will receive a complimentary one-year subscription to the REVIEW, courtesy of the Shriver Center. Let us all work together to keep alive the mission to eradicate poverty!

Ilze Sprudz Hirsh

CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW encourages the submission of articles from legal aid field staff and others. Send articles to Ilze Sprudz Hirsh, editor and vice president of communication programs, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, 50 E. Washington St. Suite 500, Chicago, IL 60602.

The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and should not be construed as representing the opinions or policy of the organizations which employ them or of the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law.

CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW: JOURNAL OF POVERTY LAW AND POLICY is published six times a year, in February, April, June, August, October, and December by the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, 50 E. Washington St. Suite 500, Chicago, IL 60602. Annual subscription price for hard copy and online access to REVIEW articles back to 1990: \$105 to advocates at Legal Services Corporation-funded programs, \$250 to nonprofit entities, \$400 to individuals, and \$500 to law libraries and foundations. ISSN 0009-868X.

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