



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** Res 0890-2005, **Version:** A

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### Res. No. 890-A

Resolution calling upon Congress and the President to maintain federal funding of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and to renew our nation's commitment to combat poverty, ameliorate racial and ethnic inequality and empower low-income communities.

By Council Members Martinez, Fidler, Reyna, The Speaker (Council Member Miller) and Council Members DeBlasio, Baez, Brewer, Clarke, Comrie, Foster, Gennaro, Gerson, Gonzalez, James, Jennings, Katz, Liu, McMahon, Palma, Quinn, Recchia Jr., Rivera, Sanders Jr., Sears, Vann, Weprin, Felder, Arroyo, Stewart, Lopez, Koppell, Nelson and The Public Advocate (Ms. Gotbaum)

Whereas, The most recent federal Census reported that during Calendar Year 2003, nearly 36 million Americans were living in poverty; and

Whereas, The Economic Policy Institute reported that in addition to the disturbingly large number of poor people in the United States, the wealth disparity between the rich and poor has been growing, as the wages of millions of lower-income workers have dwindled; and

Whereas, As the result of the economic impact of literally centuries of institutionalized racism, one out of three Black and Hispanic children live in poverty and the Black and Hispanic median family income is 37 percent below that of White families, according to Americans for Democratic Action; and

Whereas, The Community Service Society reported that in the year 2003, poverty in New York City remained "staggeringly high," with one out of five New Yorkers living below the federal poverty line; and

Whereas, According to the Community Services Block Grant-New York City Fact Sheet (the "Fact Sheet"), the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) is a federal anti-poverty program that was established under the framework of the 1981 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, a measure that financially supports a broad range of community-based programs that combat poverty, provide emergency services to low-income people, empower people to achieve self-sufficiency and revitalize low-income communities; and

Whereas, The provisions of the Federal Fiscal Year 2006 budget, as proposed by the Bush

Administration (the “Bush Budget”), would result in the termination of the CSBG program; and

Whereas, Pursuant to this termination, the Bush Budget would “consolidate” 18 different federal social services programs, including the CSBG, into a single block grant; and

Whereas, This “consolidation” actually represents a cut in funding to our nation’s anti-poverty effort, since the 18 above-mentioned programs received \$5.3 billion in funding in Federal Fiscal Year 2005 and would be allocated a mere \$3.7 billion in Federal Fiscal Year 2006; and

Whereas, As this signifies a more than 30 percent cut in critical anti-poverty funding, which would have a severely detrimental impact on our most vulnerable communities, it is a misleading ploy to represent these cuts as a “Strengthening America’s Communities Initiative,” as the Bush Administration claims; and

Whereas, On March 17, 2005, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H. Con. Res. 95, which included no funding for the Community Services Block Grant program in Federal Fiscal Year 2006, and made no assumptions regarding the implementation of the President’s proposed “Strengthening America’s Communities Initiative” that would replace the current CSBG program; and

Whereas, The House report accompanying H. Con. Res. 95 states that the CSBG provides invaluable assistance to low-income families and communities and due consideration should be given to this program before Congress implements any changes; and

Whereas, On March 17, 2005, the U.S. Senate passed S. Con. Res. 18, which added \$1.8 billion to the programs that would be folded into the “Strengthening America’s Communities Initiative” and would restore the CSBG program to Federal Fiscal Year 2005 levels; and

Whereas, At this time, the future of the CSBG program is still uncertain and subject to future action to be taken by and negotiated between both Houses of Congress and the Executive branch; and

Whereas, According to the House Budget Committee-Democratic Caucus, to help pay for a small portion of its costly tax cuts and Social Security privatization, the Bush Administration is proposing to cut key social services resulting in only a small impact on the large deficits generated by this Administration’s reckless

fiscal policies; and

Whereas, According to the Legislative Action brief published by the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees, in addition to slashing needed funding for successful social programs such as the CSBG, the Bush Budget also includes provisions that would make permanent the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts, and repeals the estate tax on multimillionaires, thereby “starving the government” of revenues that could be allocated towards programs such as the CSBG; and

Whereas, In New York, the CSBG program, which is administered by the New York Department of State, Division of Community Services and the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development, serves New York City youth, seniors and immigrants, and acts as a catalyst for community development; and

Whereas, In Fiscal Year 2004, New York City received approximately \$30.6 million in CSBG funds, to which it added \$7.6 million in City Tax Levy funding, supporting more than 200 community-based New York City organizations and serving more than 113,000 people; and

Whereas, Through the CSBG allocation, community-based organizations leveraged an additional \$24 million in funds and recruited volunteer services valued at \$42 million; and

Whereas, CSBG-funded programs have a demonstrated record of effectiveness, and cutting funding for these valuable programs would have a detrimental impact on social services that are essential to the well being of low-income New Yorkers; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon Congress and the President to maintain federal funding of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and to renew our nation’s commitment to combat poverty, ameliorate racial and ethnic inequality and empower low-income communities.

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