

# Stop the Cuts to Pennsylvania's Most Vulnerable Citizens

*Disabled, blind, and elderly poor face cuts of 19% - 24% in their State Supplemental Payments (SSP) unless the Legislature acts now.*

## **Who receives the SSP?**

As of December 31, 2009, 345,000 very low income elderly, severely disabled, and blind Pennsylvanians received the SSP. This includes 67,000 children.

## **How much is the SSP?**

To qualify for the SSP, individuals must receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), a federal benefit for the very poor administered by the Social Security Administration. The maximum SSI grant for an individual is \$674/month. For a couple, it's \$1011/month. Until the new cut, the SSP grant provided an additional \$27.40/month for an individual and \$43.70/month for a couple. In combination, this is well below the poverty level.

## **How much is the planned state cut to the SSP?**

The Department of Public Welfare intends to reduce the SSP for an individual by \$5.30/month (down 19%) and by \$10.40/month for a couple (down 24%)

## **When will the SSP cuts take place?**

The DPW intends to cut the SSP effective February 2010.

## **Why is the planned cut so harmful and unfair?**

Individuals living on SSI are among the most vulnerable citizens in Pennsylvania. They are either too disabled or too elderly to work. Their total SSI grants only pay 77.7% of the federal poverty line so every dollar counts. And this year, SSI grants did not receive a cost-of-living allowance. A reduction of \$5.30 per month is a missed meal, a medical co-pay that cannot be met, or a paratransit ride that cannot be taken.

## **How much does Pennsylvania expect to "save" by making these cuts?**

"Savings" is estimated at \$9.4 million this fiscal year; \$22.9 million in FY 2010-2011.

## **Who opposes these cuts?**

These cuts were first announced on Jan. 16th. A rapidly growing state-wide coalition has come together to advocate for the prompt reinstatement of the SSP benefit. This coalition includes the PA AARP, Action Alliance of Senior Citizens of Gr. Phila., PA Alliance for Retired Americans, PA Budget & Policy Center, PA Catholic Conference, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry of PA, PA Council of Churches, PA Jewish Coalition, Disability Rights Network of PA, Mental Health Associations of PA, and of Southeastern PA, NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania, Nat'l Federation of the Blind of PA, PA Council of the Blind, Just Harvest, Project HOME, Homeless Advocacy Project, United Cerebral Palsy, Mon Valley Unemployed Committee., Nat'l Ass'n of Social Workers of PA, Community Legal Services, Women's Law Project, Pathways PA, CARIE, Community Justice Project and others.

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