

June 19, 2009

The Honorable Jim McDermott
Chairman, House Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Supports
House Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman McDermott:

I am writing on the behalf of the Women of Color Policy Network at New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service in support HR 2909, The Measuring American Poverty Act of 2009, and to thank you for introducing such an important piece of legislation.

The Women of Color Policy Network, NYU Wagner conducts original research and collects data on women of color, their families and communities. Research generated at the Network is used to create informed public policies at local, state and national levels. The Network is the only research and policy institute in the country focused on racial and ethnic minority women housed at a top ranked public policy school.

As researchers and policy-advocates, having an accurate measure of the number of individuals and families living at or below the poverty line is critical to our work. We rely on accurate and timely statistics to work with legislators, non-profit organizations, and advocates to funnel much needed resources to communities in need.

As you know, the current poverty measure has not been updated in nearly 60 years. This important piece of legislation will go a long way toward helping legislators, advocates, and community leaders understand the problem of persistent poverty in the U.S. If our aim is to cut poverty in half over the next ten years, we will need to accurately access need and measure progress.

We look forward to working with you and your staff to help pass this important legislation. If you have any questions or require additional information from us, please feel free to contact us at 212.992.9881.

Sincerely,



C. Nicole Mason, PhD
Research Assistant Professor
Executive Director
Women of Color Policy Network, NYU Wagner

