

June 2, 2010

Dear Members of the U.S. Congress and the Obama Administration:

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When GDP (Gross Domestic Product) keeps rising at the same time that joblessness is dangerously high and childcare and educational budgets are slashed, it is clear that we urgently need new measurements that give policy makers and the public a more accurate picture of the true economic health of the country and our citizens.

On behalf of the millions of people we represent across the United States, we call for immediate action in formulating new measures – and solutions – based on the findings and recommendations of [\*The State of Society: Measuring Economic Success and Human Well-Being\*](#), a report commissioned by the Center for Partnership Studies (CPS) released by the Urban Institute in May 2010.

*The State of Society* report shows that GDP not only does not reflect the well-being of society but also that many efforts to provide alternatives still marginalize bellwether segments of the population, including the majority: women and children.

We take particular note of studies cited in *The State of Society* showing that the status of children is a key indicator of long-term economic health, and that there is a critical link between the status of women and children’s welfare, as well as a society’s general quality of life and economic competitiveness (World Economic Forum’s *Gender Gap* reports, World Values Surveys, and CPS’ *Women, Men, & the Global Quality of Life*).

We consider the development of inclusive and accurate measurements that go beyond GDP essential not only in human and environmental terms but in purely financial ones. Indeed, this is urgent for the United States as we move from the industrial to the post-industrial knowledge-information-service age. Economists emphasize the importance of investing in what they call “high quality human capital,” and studies show that investment in human infrastructure and capacity development, starting in early childhood, must be a top priority.

As the leaders of organizations promoting women, children, civil and human rights, caregivers, health care workers, teachers, socially responsible business, a healthy natural environment, progressive faith-based activism, and social justice overall, we call on the U.S. Congress, and the Obama Administration, particularly the Department of Commerce and the Council of Economic Advisors, to take action in response to the report’s following three recommendations:

1. Further research and analysis is needed to coordinate the 28 alternative indicator projects highlighted in the report and to explore other such efforts.

2. Inclusive indicators of economic health, environmental sustainability, and social well-being that pay particular attention to the status of women, children, the elderly, and minorities based on race, ethnicity, disability, and sexual identity are urgently needed.
3. [\*The State of Society\*](#) report should be used to initiate conversations and actions toward consensus around indicators that more accurately and comprehensively capture a nation's economic health, environmental sustainability, and human well-being.

We are urging other organizations to join with us in support of the Urban Institute's *The State of Society: Measuring Economic Success and Human Well-Being*, as part of the Caring Economics Campaign described at the CPS website, [www.partnershipway.org](http://www.partnershipway.org).

President Obama and members of Congress: We look forward to your support of this vitally important step toward a more sustainable and equitable economy!

A list of organizations and individuals who have signed on to support the findings and recommendations of the *The State of Society* report can be found at [www.partnershipway.org](http://www.partnershipway.org).

In partnership,

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