



San Diego Coalition for a Strong Middle Class

Building our future with the right jobs now: **Good. Green. Local.**

New Community Coalition Demands Accountability in Local Stimulus Spending

For immediate release

March 19, 2009

Contact: Xavier Leonard, (619) 964 -6522 or (619) 584-5744 x29

The San Diego Coalition for a Strong Middle Class will hold a pressconference on Friday, March 20, to announce a campaign for increasing accountability among San Diego officials making stimulus package spending decisions.

Stimulus Accountability Watchdog Press Conference

10 a.m. Friday, March 20

Hoover High School, 4474 El Cajon Blvd.

Speakers for the event include Assemblymembers Marty Block and Lori Saldana, clergy, workers and community leaders.

Hoover High School is one of 180 San Diego Unified schools slated to benefit from Proposition S spending, and an additional \$20 million from President Obama's Recovery Act.

"The money San Diego spends should be about recovery, and recovery means jobs. 400,000 California jobs will be created or saved by the stimulus package. Every one of those jobs must be a good job with a middle-class career path for local residents," said the Rev. Richard Lawrence, a coalition leader and member of the San Diego County Affordable Housing Coalition.

The coalition calls for new jobs created with public money to be "good, green and local," and proclaims "a strong middle class = a strong San Diego." The motto echoes President Obama's recent statement that "the strength of our economy can be measured directly by the strength of our middle class."

The social service, faith-based, and economic justice agencies that comprise the coalition see public investment as a remedy for middleclass evaporation. They also warn of possible pitfalls if that investment is handled unwisely.

"We don't want 'shovel-ready' to mean throwing money down a hole in the ground," added Lawrence. "We applaud the School Board for placing Prop S projects under a Project Stabilization Agreement. That decision creates jobs that result in security and productive careers. All the money that's coming should be spent this way."

The emphasis that the Obama administration has placed on transparency and accountability inspires the coalition's "watchdog" stance. The Recovery Act website (recovery.gov) states, "This is your money. You have a right to know where it's going and how it's being spent."

Ardent public outcry over bailout recipient AIG's executive bonuses suggests a widespread desire for more watchdogs like the San Diego Coalition for a Strong Middle Class.

"There's a lot of money to train people for green jobs. We want green jobs, but good green jobs. A good job means wages that provide economic stability, healthcare benefits that offer families a sense of security," said Stephanie Monroe, Organizing Director for the Center on Policy Initiatives.

All speakers are available for interviews.

Coalition Members: Urban League of San Diego County, San Diego Education Association, Center on Policy Initiatives, Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice, Parent Institute for Quality Education, San Diego Apollo Alliance, Barrio Station, ACORN, Empower San Diego, San Diego County Affordable Housing Coalition, Center for Social Advocacy, Cesar Chavez Service Clubs, San Diego County Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, San Diego County Building and Construction Trades Council, San Diego Imperial Counties Labor Council