

# SPEAKER TESTIMONIES

Congressional Forum  
Putting America Back to Work: Direct Job Creation in Local Communities  
May 25, 2010

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**Mandy Alvar**, Community Health Partnership, Eau Claire, WI



Honorable members of Congress, staff, and those representing the unemployed, thank you for this opportunity to address the critical issue of job loss facing our nation.

My name is Mandy Alvar, and I am currently employed as a Certified Nursing Assistant with a non-profit care management program in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. This program has faithfully provided in-home, long term care for frail elderly and adults with physical or developmental disabilities who would otherwise be forced to live in a nursing home or alternative care facility.

I am testifying today because I will be laid off sometime between July 14th and October 1st. I will not only be losing my job, but my health and life insurance, dental and vision benefits, and 401K retirement plan as well. There is no other homecare agency that can compensate for this and it would be impossible to even attempt to carry on the cost of these resources myself as I would be paying 10 times as much, for premiums alone, than I pay now.

Losing my job will have a significant impact on my life and that of my coworkers. There are other smaller homecare programs. However, working for any of them, I would be facing a 20% decrease in income, I would not have access to any benefits, I would lose mileage reimbursement, and I would most likely not be able to maintain the same guaranteed full time status I have now. I always assumed that working in the health care field would guarantee me job security, but no one is safe anymore.

But this isn't just about me losing my job. The layoffs at my agency deeply affect the people we care for, and I personally feel a greater burden for them than for myself. As the entire homecare division of my company phases out, letting go of 90 employees, it leaves a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety for our members who are already quite vulnerable and have depended on familiar, consistent, skilled aides caring for them so that they can live as independently as possible in their own homes. For many of our members, this creates a complete upheaval in their lives—one individual even attempted suicide due to the impending effect our layoffs would have on her future care. When we start eliminating or cutting this segment of the workforce it never just affects the person being terminated; it has a ripple effect to so many others. The Local Jobs for America Act could rebuild what has been broken and help to reinvest in our communities by restoring jobs back to those who provide life-sustaining services for others.

I do not make this appeal, today, as if the government owes me something simply because I am losing my job. I would, however, hope to be a voice for my fellow home health aides who invest so much into the lives of those they care for as well as those who are in need of immediate help on the local level. Congress and the Administration need to act now to pass the Local Jobs for America Act for those who are not only losing their jobs, but are also losing vital benefits that will not be replaced, which help to sustain their lives and that of their families. Furthermore, we need to pass this legislation for all those who are impacted by the crucial services those individuals provide.

On behalf of my local community, fellow co-workers, and those who receive our care, I want to thank you for this opportunity to speak here today.

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**Mandy Alvar** is a Certified Nursing Assistant and has worked for the Community Health Partnership for eight years. CHP is a long-term managed care program that provides in-home care to frail elderly people and individuals with physical and developmental disabilities who would otherwise be forced to live in a nursing home or alternative care facility. She enjoys working with a diverse clientele. Mandy learned in May that her entire division will be closing and she will be laid off in the near future. While she is concerned about finding her next job, she is particularly concerned for her clients, to whom she has provided consistent care over long periods of time.

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**Christian Dorsey**, Economic Policy Institute



Now that our economy is again adding jobs after two consecutive years of job losses left us over eleven million jobs short of what we need, it might be tempting to breathe a huge sigh of relief. Do not exhale yet.

All reasonable economic models tell us that it will still be years before we return to normal employment levels. High rates of unemployment do lasting harm—certainly to the periodic and chronically unemployed and their families—but to everyone in the form of stagnant wages, increased pressures on the social safety net and overall economic performance that falls far below potential. This has been our reality for the last two and a half, and waiting two and a half more for things to change is unacceptable.

Now last February, Congress took a bold and necessary step, enacting the President’s American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), which, as advertised, is on track to produce 3.5 million jobs. But remember, since the ARRA was introduced, four million more Americans have been added to the ranks of the unemployed.

And while I see reason for optimism as I look at the economic landscape, there are also clear signs of danger ahead. No one has been spared from the unemployment and consequences of this recession, but some groups have faced more dramatic downturns in their fortunes.

While there is often talk that this is a “HEcession,” one where men have been the primary victims, this somewhat crude analysis neglects some real changes seen in recent months. In the 1990’s recession, women lost 2 jobs for every 100 men lost. In the 2000’s, it was 17—today women are losing 46 jobs for every 100 lost by men. And in recent months, while men are gaining jobs, women continue to lose them. This comes at a time when the importance of women in the labor market is undeniable, as they comprise nearly 50% of the workforce.

When looking at women with children, Moms, we see some sobering data. The unemployment rate for single moms has increased 70% since the start of the recession. In two-parent families during this same period, the number of women who are the only jobholder—in other words, the sole breadwinner—has increased 50%.

Similarly, racial and ethnic minorities have endured tremendous burdens. Black Americans, for example, have unemployment rates of 16.5% nationally—closer to 1 in 5 than 1 in 10. Latinos, who in 2006 had unemployment rates almost as low as the overall unemployment rate, now face a jobs crisis where 1 out of every 8 is unemployed. Moreover, because blacks and Latinos remain relatively concentrated in segregated neighborhoods, whole communities are devastated by the effects of high unemployment. The pain in these communities is putting a tremendous pressure on the federal, state and local safety nets, and yet at a time when they are most needed, state and local governments are weakening their supports.

State and local governments must balance their budgets and thus have only three real options when facing budget deficits—raise taxes, cut spending or both. And since politicians are so averse to raising taxes, spending for public and human workers like teachers and firefighters and services like child and senior care and public health get excised. Already, nearly 200,000 local public servants have lost their jobs to bring local budgets into balance, and the shortfalls in the next two local budget years will require 200,000 more layoffs at least.

I say, at least, because states and cities report that they have already implemented strategies like hiring and wage freezes and furloughs to minimize terminations. Layoffs are usually the last resort, and with expected budget shortfalls in the coming fiscal years as large as they were in the past two, we have surely reached the point where mass terminations are the only tool left. What’s more, for every 100 layoffs in the public sector, there are 30 layoffs in the private sector due to lost income and decreased consumer spending.

As state and local governments contract, our fledgling recovery becomes more fragile still. In addition, the layoffs that come from local government cutbacks will add to the pain for women and minorities. Why? The public sector has been a refuge from the very real issues of employment discrimination on the bases of race and gender. Women, blacks

and Latinos make up more of the payrolls of local government than their share of the workforce would suggest. The flipside is that when the public sector cuts back, these very same groups endure the most of the job losses.

No single piece of legislation is going to get America out of its unemployment crisis, but I'll tell you; there is one that goes a long way in mitigating many of the issues I have outlined--the Local Jobs for America Act (LJAA).

The headline is that the LJAA will create 1 million jobs, a big and necessary number of jobs given the enormous hole we face. Equally important, though, is that those jobs will be created in the communities hardest hit by the downturn. The funding formula, which favors communities with high unemployment and high poverty rates, ensures that relief will flow where it is most needed. In short, the LJAA provides great "bang for our public bucks"; allows for the maintenance of essential human services; protects against the actions of states and localities plunging us back in recession, and gives vulnerable workers a chance to retain their dignity while working for the common good.

Now, I saw that someone has a sign that says "Bailouts for poor people not banks." While I agree with the general sentiment that our unemployed and low-income earners deserve federal attention, I reject the idea that you are asking for a bailout. By demanding job creation in local communities, you aren't asking for a handout, you are simply asking for a chance to lift yourselves and your families out from a mess you didn't create. It is now time for Congress to deliver.

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**Christian Dorsey** is the Director of External and Government Affairs at the Economic Policy Institute in Washington DC. EPI is a progressive, non-partisan think tank that conducts ongoing research of our nation's economy and develops policy proposals to increase economic growth and broadly shared prosperity. Christian directs the Institute's work in building awareness of economic policy matters with a goal of educating and mobilizing communities to advocate more effectively on their economic behalf and to advance EPI's policy initiatives with Congress and the Obama administration. Christian is a frequent commentator on cable news networks having appeared on CNN, CNBC and Fox among others.

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**Mayor Laurent F. Gilbert, Sr.,** City of Lewiston, ME



Honorable Members of Congress,

I wish to thank you most sincerely for the opportunity to address you today on the Local Jobs for America Act (H.R. 4812). As Mayor of the All-America City of Lewiston, Maine I am honored to be before you today in strong support of this legislation.

I have served the City of Lewiston, Maine starting in 1969 as a patrol officer and working my way up through the ranks to Chief of Police during my last five years of a twenty-five year career there.

I retired from the department to accept an appointment by President Bill Clinton as the United States Marshal for the District of Maine for a period of eight years. I then served five years as the Associate Director of the Maine Community Policing Institute at the University of Maine at Augusta.

I have served Maine's second largest city as Lewiston's mayor since February 2007.

As you can see, public service has been my life.

Lewiston is the home of Maine's two poorest census tracts. 18% of our population has incomes below the poverty level. We have the highest percentage of children living in poverty.

The City's general assistance, or local welfare costs, has more than doubled over the last three years. We are seeing residents we have never seen before who are struggling to stay in their homes or pay their rents.

Non-profit organizations that provide services to those in need have seen a drop in contributions and are struggling to meet the growing need for their services.

State safety net programs have been reduced, placing a greater demand on local governments and the non-profit centers to fill the gap.

The city as a whole has seen an unemployment rate consistently over 9%.

Lewiston and its twin city across the Androscoggin River had been a textile and shoe manufacturing center. With the decline of these industries in the 1960's these two communities have struggled in bringing about good paying jobs.

New job development in the Lewiston-Auburn area has largely been stagnated with no significant new construction in the business sector over the last two years.

In the government sector, Lewiston has experienced a 16% decline in jobs since 2002 and has a \$43million budget, faced a \$4.5 million budget gap this year due to the recession and reductions in state revenue sharing with municipalities.

Job reductions, coupled with other cost cutting measures proposed in the budget, will have serious impacts such as the fact that winter plowing will take longer and snow and ice may remain on our streets for a longer period after a storm. Street lighting will be reduced. With an old multi-family housing stock in our downtown mill district, fire inspection programs will be cut. As you can see there could well be public safety implications as a result of these cuts that we have made with no other alternatives available to us.

State government has reduced funding for K-12 education resulting in reductions in education staff. This has been mitigated somewhat by recovery act funding over the last couple of years but will hit home again a year from now when that funding is eliminated. In Lewiston alone, we estimate reductions in excess of \$1 million on a \$50 million budget in the next fiscal year.

The Local Jobs for America Act will help us to save and create local jobs through the retention, restoration, and perhaps even expansion of services that are so vitally needed by the people of our community.

With the loss of public works jobs, our public ways, parks and other public places are in need of ongoing cleaning and maintenance. Adding to our public works staffing to address infrastructure maintenance is of critical importance.

The summer youth program in Kennedy Park, which is located in the midst of our poorest census district, was not funded by the city this year. Funding for recreation programs would allow this youth program to continue, including its free lunch program, and to be expanded into after school programming during the school year. Proper nutrition is lacking in these poorest of our neighborhoods and idle youth are at risk of criminal behavior.

The library was forced to reduce its cultural programs and offerings due to staff reductions. These could be restored. Additional staffing could be provided for our New Mainer programs that are directed at our immigrant populations and focus on literacy, reading, and assisting our immigrant community in adjusting to our life in America.

St. Mary's Hospital operates the Nutrition Center of Maine, offering a food pantry, jobs that turn vacant lots turned into gardens to provide food for the needy, as well as to supply a summer farmers market. It also serves as a center, providing cooking classes in healthy nutrition. Additional staff would assist this program in expanding its offerings, especially in the area of wellness and nutrition education.

We need workers for our stressed out social services department to assist clients in accessing services and finding employment. Many non-governmental organizations have had to reduce their staffs resulting in the elimination of services to people in desperate need.

We have people who are in desperate need of employment to provide for their families. I have seen firsthand the suicide of a neighbor who after having been unemployed for eight months in the shoe industry, saw no hope for future employment and, in his deep depression, took his own life. This I am sure is happening daily somewhere in our country.

We need to give our people hope. With employment comes a sense of dignity. No one in American should have to live lacking dignity. Our human nature demands it and our government can provide it with its assistance.

We are starting to see things turn around on Wall Street but not on the Main Streets of our municipalities in this country. Two weeks ago, we had to make the decision to cut 21.5 positions, including firefighters, police officers, and city workers from a staff of 345. We'll continue to have to make such difficult choices if we can't do something to create jobs now. We need your help to recover our economy from the ground up!

Without the help from our federal government to create jobs for our municipalities, we simply add to the problem. In order to rejuvenate the circulation of money it will require an infusion provided by you, our elected representatives in Congress.

Honorable members of Congress, I wish to express my sincere appreciation for having provided me with the opportunity to address you today on this vital need to return our people back to work so that they may enjoy a quality of life that, as Americans, they so richly deserve. Again, thank you most sincerely!

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**Mayor Laurent Gilbert** has served as Mayor of Lewiston, Maine since February 2007. He was born in Lewiston and grew up partly in Southern California. After serving in the Vietnam War from 1966 to 1967, he worked briefly for Continental Airlines in Los Angeles before returning to Lewiston. He then served in the Lewiston Police Department for 25 years, including five years as Chief of Police. For eight years, Laurent served as the United States Marshal for the District of Maine under an appointment by President Bill Clinton. He also served for five years as the Associate Director of the Maine Community Policing Institute at the University of Maine at Augusta. Mayor Gilbert received a Bachelor of Science Degree with Distinction in the Administration of Justice and an Associate of Science Degree with Distinction in Criminal Justice, both from The University of Maine at Augusta. He is married to the former Patricia Rodrigue of Augusta and they have three children, Karen, Karla & Laurent (Larry) Jr.

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**Rosemary Hicks**, Tuskegee Youth Safe Haven, Holly Springs, MS



Good Afternoon. I am Rosemary Hicks, a volunteer and mentor of Tuskegee Youth Safe Haven, which is a nonprofit organization that inspired the youth in Tuskegee, Alabama to aim for success regardless of the economic depression that their community displays. Fifty percent of Tuskegee's population is on welfare and it is one of the poorest counties in the state of Alabama.

I am testifying today because I always knew I would attend college. My parents made it very evident and I figured it was the quickest way to the "American Dream." I decided to attend Tuskegee University and major in sales and marketing. During my tenure at Tuskegee University, I held leadership positions such as NAACP Community Service Chairperson and Student Government Association Vice President. I even interned at Caterpillar, Inc. I did everything in my power to ensure that I would be marketable to employees after graduation. On May 9, 2010, I was the first person from my immediate family to graduate from college. However, after searching for employment for over five months, applying to over 30 jobs, and graduating Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science Degree in sales and marketing, I still have not found employment. Finding employment is difficult, because not only am I competing with other college graduates, but with candidates who have been laid off due to the recession. These candidates also have experience and are willing to take an entry level salary. Gaining employment is very important to me at this stage in my life. I have over \$20,000 to pay back in student loans and my parents are in their retirement age, which places responsibility on me to be in the position to assist them financially.

Thousands of college students will graduate this year without a full time employment offer or opportunity. They will have to return home with the hopes of finding a job in their local communities. The Local Jobs for America Act would create jobs not only for the unemployed but for the college graduates who do not have a Fortune 500 company job and still want to gain employment to contribute to society in hopes of still accomplishing their American Dream. Also, for the youth I inspire every day, they need to know that the American Dream is still obtainable. We need Congress and the Administration to act NOW. They need to pass the Local Jobs for America Act today. On behalf of my organization and my community, I want to thank you for having me as a speaker here today.

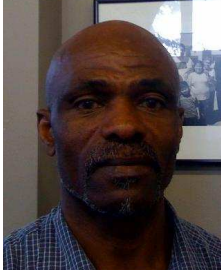
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**Rosemary Hicks** graduated from Tuskegee University in early May, becoming the first member in her family to finish college. She held leadership roles while in college, including NAACP Community Service Chairperson and Student Government Association Vice President. Despite graduating Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Sales and Marketing, she has not been able to find employment. Ms. Hicks is anxious to start a career, in part so she can begin paying back student loans and to help support her family financially.

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**Charles Jenkins**, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, Chicago, IL



My name is Charles Jenkins. I am a father, and I have worked all of my adult life, over 30 years. I am a member of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. CCH is a member organization of thousands of homeless and formally homeless families and individuals, with supporters from schools, clergy, and the community.

I am testifying today because I need a job. I am here to tell Congress and the President to ACT by passing the Local Jobs for America Act.

After working for about a year as a driver for a transportation company, I became very ill and was hospitalized in the ICU. Because of company policy, I had no sick time and was terminated cold on the spot, while still in my hospital bed.

I was unemployed for the next 10 months, looking for work and applying to 10 to 15 positions a week. I had to apply for food stamps and family care just to survive. Just as my unemployment benefits were about to end, a TANF ECF work opportunity became available to me, a real chance to showcase my work ethic and abilities, as well as developing greater working skills with the possibility of permanent employment. This TANF ECF work initiative is a prime example of how the Local Jobs for America Act can work. However, as it stands, the position I have in this program ends September 30.

I am an example of the millions who are looking for work and need a job. Looking at communities across America, jobs are lost in the millions in communities like the one my family and I live in, in Chicago. The state of Illinois' unemployment rate is at its highest in more than 10 years at 11.5%. Around Chicago, in some African American communities, the rate is above 30%, which is over 5% higher than the national Depression rate.

There has always been the need for jobs and job training programs in communities like the one I live in, so I say to you, the Local Jobs for America Act must be passed and implemented right away. The Local Jobs for America Act will put a million people in public and private jobs quickly. It provides \$75 billion over two years for states and localities to employ workers to meet critical community needs. That is the most direct way to stimulate the economy and put America back to work now. At the end of the day, it's not about pay-go, it's about investing in our communities and the economy of our country.

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**Charles Jenkins** was born and raised in Chicago. In June 2009, Charles was hospitalized due to a severe illness. Due to his company's policy on seniority, he was terminated, and in July 2009, he began receiving unemployment benefits. Recently, he has begun working as a Community Organizer in Training for the Chicago Coalition on Hunger through the TANF ECF subsidized employment program. Mr. Jenkins is 55 years old, a hard worker, and a loving father of seven.

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**Melissa McClure**, Community Voices Heard, New York, NY



My name is Melissa McClure. I'm here representing Community Voices Heard (CVH) in New York City. CVH is a member organization of several thousand and was formed in 1994 to help lower income women find employment and housing.

After working 40 years, I have been unemployed since 2006. This despite having a Bachelor of Fine Arts, 10 years in the fashion industry and 15 years in retail management. Being out of work for so long has made me one of the 4.4 million "missing workers". I'm not even counted as unemployed anymore!

It's been hard for me to listen to these stories because it makes me so angry. Actually, I'm furious!! There are almost 31 and a half million stories similar to those we just heard, throughout our country, and here we are still discussing whether or not to go forward with this jobs bill! Really. What are you waiting for? Another recession???

Everyday, we jobless millions watch headline grabbing corporate weasels wiggle out of their commitments to the public, while our elected officials squabble and fight about slapping them on the wrist, grand standing for one cause while quietly going along with whichever lobbyist has the deepest pockets to advance their career or party.

Well, today, I too am a lobbyist!!! I'm a card-carrying member of the largest lobby in history, the "Un or Underemployed Lobby"! And WE want to know why we are being shuffled down on the list of importance. We know that getting people back to work full-time, in real, paying jobs is the key to our country's recovery. You cannot conclude that the economy is recovering until businesses resume hiring in earnest.

This is no time for politics as usual. We need genuine leadership in all levels of government: leaders, and there are some of you here, with intestinal fortitude—that's guts!—to speak out, stand up and fight to push the Local Jobs for America Act through Congress now.

For our part, dozens of community groups across the nation are today launching a campaign both on the web and person to person, to collect a million resumes, to flood Congress and the White House to raise the necessary awareness on the dire unemployment situation and the Local Jobs for America bill.

The Nigerian poet and novelist, Ben Okri said: "The most authentic thing about us is our capacity to create, to overcome, to endure, to transform, to love and to be greater than our suffering."

We, the "Un or Underemployed Lobby," don't have deep pockets, that's for sure. However, we have awakened from our lethargy of "having-it-all" and we are ready to fight TOGETHER to get our country and ourselves back on our feet!!!

Let me be the first to hand you my resume!

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**Melissa McClure** lives in New York City and has been unemployed since November 2006, one of the 4.4 million "missing workers." She has worked for over 15 years in retail management and before that, in the fashion industry. She holds a Bachelors degree in Fine Arts. However, in this economic environment, she has not been able to find work.

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**Melissa Nieves**, Union Settlement Association, New York, NY



Honorable members of Congress, staff, and members of the unemployed community, thank you for the opportunity to testify here today.

My name is Melissa Nieves, and I am the Director of Adult Education at Union Settlement Association, which is one of the oldest and largest social service providers in East Harlem. We currently provide a wide array of services and programs to over 13,000 local residents each year.

I am testifying today, because I am a teacher, a social service provider, a resident of my community, and I am deeply concerned about the future of my community.

As the Director of Adult Education, I see the problems faced by the adults in East Harlem.

Full-time employment is difficult to obtain, and so many individuals are working two or three jobs to try to make ends meet. Many of my students are under-employed in low-wage jobs that do not provide sufficient income to support their families. Others are struggling to find any employment at all.

The adults we serve are also suffering from the high cost of food, housing, and transportation. We have challenges sending adults on job interviews or job training, because they do not have appropriate clothes to wear, or transportation money to get to and from the interview. Our low-income students, many of whom receive food stamps, are finding that, by the end of the month, their food pantry is bare. Many adults come to school hungry, opting to save food and their money for their children.

Notwithstanding these hardships, our students are motivated to get their GEDs, learn English, get job training, or do whatever else they can to improve their lives and the lives of their families.

Unfortunately, these services are at risk because of pending federal, state and local funding reductions. The current proposed New York City budget would eliminate all city-funded adult literacy programs. We have been able to fill in recent gaps with funding from the America Reconstruction and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), but that funding is scheduled to expire September 30, 2010. Without funding, I will have to lay off 32 teachers and job counselors and turn away 1200 adults and disconnected youth. If this happens, be sure that my competition—the street hustlers—will definitely be there to offer negative alternatives.

The Local Jobs for America Act is exactly the kind of broad and bold federal job creation program that we need. It will put people back to work immediately and will sustain vital public and social services. In addition, putting people back to work will result in increased income and sales tax revenues, thereby allowing state and local governments to increase their spending on vital social services.

I am an optimistic American who knows that our country will flourish and will recover from these hard times. I want the families of my community to have the skills needed to be part of this success. Allow us to contribute to the re-growth of our communities, and also please hold us accountable. As a community leader, I promise to spend each dollar you send us wisely and use cost-effective measures to utilize the funds invested in our local community.

Thank you once again for giving me the opportunity to testify today. I appeal to Congress to support us in our effort to continue this mission and to strengthen our local economy through education and job development.

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**Melissa Nieves** is Director of Adult Education at Union Settlement Association in New York City. Union Settlement is one of the oldest and largest social service providers in East Harlem, established in 1895. Prior to joining Union Settlement in 2006, she served as Director of the Harlem Center for Education's Educational Opportunity Center and as Director of ESL, Literacy & Computer Services at University Settlement. Ms. Nieves has a Bachelor's degree from Long Island University and is fluent in Spanish, French and Italian. She brings 18 years of teaching, counseling and adult education experience. She was raised in Brooklyn and is a first-generation college graduate.

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**Nadina Patterson**, Philadelphia Unemployment Project, Philadelphia, PA



I would like to thank members of Congress, staff and members of my community here today that are unemployed, to allow me to share my story.

My name is Nadina Patterson, and I am a member and volunteer of Philadelphia Unemployment Project, which has been in existence for the past 35 years. Our objective is to help the unemployed. We have about 1,000 members; 400 are looking daily for unemployment.

I am testifying today because I am unemployed and the current economic crisis has affected me and my family. I am here to tell Congress and the President to act by passing the Local Jobs for America Act. I am a divorcee, with 2 adult children and 3 grand kids. I live by myself. I have been working all my life. I was recently laid off from a nonprofit organization as an outreach counselor.

I have been unemployed for the last year and a half and if I lose my benefits, I will be in a dire situation of not knowing when I will have any income coming in. I do not have any other sources. My family is not able to help me. I have responsibilities that I have to meet, such as shelter, food, medical, etc.

My search for employment has been extremely difficult, both emotionally and physically. I have been actively looking for employment for the past 12 months, sending out resumes, going on the internet, hitting the pavement. And when my unemployment is running out, what am I to do?

If I lose my benefits, I will be forced to move in with a member of my family, but they are dealing with economic difficulty as well and cannot support me. As a former case manager I am able to understand the hardship of individuals losing their benefits.

Unemployment is affecting my family and much of my community. This is just not about me or my family. I represent millions of people, just like me, and if they lose their benefits, the consequences will be devastating. My community, like communities across America, needs jobs.

The Local Jobs for America Act would create 4500 real paying jobs (in Philadelphia). For this will result in 4500 families being able to bring home a pay check, food on the table, and pay their utilities bills, which will get reinvested in the community. The Local Jobs for America Act will help me to get a good paying job reflective of my skills.

We need Congress and the Administration to act now to pass the Local Jobs for America Act today, not tomorrow. I thank you for having provided me with the opportunity to address you today.

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**Nadina Patterson** brings 20 years of experience in human services and has been looking for work in that field since she became unemployed in February 2009. She was laid off after working for 2 years as a health outreach worker, helping families secure timely immunizations. Despite conducting an extensive job search, it has been very difficult to find a new position due to competition. She currently volunteers with the Philadelphia Unemployment Project, which has been organizing poor and unemployed people for the past 35 years.

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