



PICO Network News

PICO National Network | *Unlocking the Power of People™*

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NEW VOICES

Protecting children's health

Sharee works hard to support her family. Rent, gas, food and heating consume most of her \$20,000 annual income. Now the House of Representatives has proposed budget cuts that could add \$1,000 to her bills, and put her three-year-old son and six million other children at risk of losing health care. As the Senate and House negotiate over starkly different budgets, PICO federations are pressing Congress to support the Senate approach which controls spending without increasing the number of uninsured children and families or reducing access to Medicaid. Click [here](#) to add your voice or learn more about this critical issue.



REBUILDING LOUISIANA

Louisiana families press for action on housing, insurance and jobs

With recovery efforts stalled, PICO LIFT leaders traveled to Washington, DC to keep the pressure on federal officials to meet commitments made to rebuild New Orleans. PICO clergy held a press conference in the United States Capitol, met with officials from FEMA and White House, Republican and Democratic members of the Louisiana Congressional Delegation and briefed 23 United States Senators on the need for a federal aid to strengthen the levees protecting New Orleans and to finance housing reconstruction for families that have lost their homes. [Read more>>](#)

Reflections from New Orleans

"Repairers of the breach would be an understatement...I don't know if you would call it ironic, but the first breach of the levee system flooding New Orleans happened at the 17th street canal, that 'Berlin Wall' between Jefferson and Orleans Parishes in southeast Louisiana, two parishes as different as night and day; Jefferson is predominately white, Republican, middle-class; and Orleans is predominately black, poor, and votes Democratic. It was at this 'breach' that I re-entered New Orleans for the first time since my family and I left at 2 a.m. on the morning of the 28th of Aug., one month and a day ago..." [Read more>>](#)



RECENT WINS AND CAMPAIGNS

Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization

San Diego wins historic Community Benefits Agreement

San Diego City Council approved the largest redevelopment project in San Diego's history with the City's first Community Benefits Agreement. The agreement includes the creation of new affordable housing, first-source hiring of local residents and ex-offenders, living wage commitments, an on-site hiring center and Environmental Green Building standards. [Read more>>](#)

Camden wins \$7 million for home improvement

In follow-up to a July 2005 action meeting with state Treasurer John McCormac, [Camden Churches Organized for People](#) held a series of work sessions with state officials to develop the guidelines for a new Camden Home Improvement Program that will channel \$7 million in home repair grants to approximately 250 Camden homeowners. [Read more>>](#)

Rebuilding communities in Kansas City

Kansas City Church Community Organization is launching a Build Communities Not Just Houses Campaign as a part of its multiyear effort to reform the housing system in the city and region. The campaign will focus on accountability over local, state and federal housing programs, increased home-repair funding, effective code enforcement, neighborhood preservation, first-time home buyer incentives, and housing options for the homeless. For more information visit www.cco.org.

Immigration Reform

Greeley, Colorado churches rally against immigration-enforcement office

Congregations Building Community (CBC) in Northern Colorado helped defeat a Greeley City Council resolution calling for a new Immigration and Customs Enforcement office in Weld County. Six hundred residents participated in a CBC meeting to protest racial profiling and stigmatizing of Latinos, who make up 35 percent of the county's population. [Read more>>](#)

Youth Development

San Francisco creates Avenues of Hope for youth

Clergy and church leaders from [San Francisco Organizing Project](#) (SFOP) filled the Mission High School Auditorium to address the epidemic of youth violence in the city. Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi and Mayor Gavin Newsom publicly agreed to support the Avenues of Hope platform that includes creating job training and employment opportunities for young people and protecting and expanding the number of small schools in San Francisco. [Read more>>](#)

Good Schools

Orlando works to protect parent involvement in Head Start law

As Congress moves to reauthorize the \$7.2 billion Head Start program [Orlando FOCUS](#) has won bipartisan support for its effort to defeat a provision in the new law that would eliminate the voting power of parent-policy councils. Head Start parents from FOCUS convinced Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) and Congressman Ric Keller (R-FL) that parent involvement through the policy councils has been critical to the success of the Head Start program and they are now working across party lines to try to amend the reauthorization bill. [Read more>>](#)

School program for Alaska Natives moves forward in Anchorage

As a result of a September 2005 meeting attended by 300 people, mostly Alaska Natives, from [Anchorage Faith and Action Congregations Together](#) (AFACT) the Anchorage School District is piloting a new program to train staff members at two schools in the culture and communication styles of Alaska Native children and to establish better relationships with their parents. [Read more>>](#)

Sacramento parents put focus back on small schools

[Sacramento Area Congregations Together](#) (ACT) brought together 450 parents with city and school district official to revive an effort to develop new small schools in Sacramento. The Sacramento District opened four new small schools in 2003 and a fifth in 2005 as a way to address large failing high schools; but changes in district leadership and rising construction costs had put the reform strategy in jeopardy. ACT is working to sustain the momentum behind reform. [Read more>>](#)

Los Angeles parents and students organize to improve high school education

Three hundred parents and students attended an LA Voice community forum on the future of large, underperforming high schools on October 19 at St. Odilia Catholic Church. They met with Superintendent Roy Romer and education experts from across California to discuss racial disparities in drop out rates and the possible restructuring or conversion of Jefferson High School into one or more charter schools. For more information contact Lisa Milton at lisa@picocalifornia.org.

OTHER NEWS

New organizing effort in Rwanda

Under the leadership of Lutheran Pastor John Rutsinditwarne PICO is supporting the development of Congregations Rebuilding Community in Rwanda, a new organizing effort designed to equip grassroots leaders to rebuild community and democratic institutions in a country that was torn apart by a horrendous genocide in 1994. [Read more>>](#)

Career Opportunities with PICO

PICO is looking for creative and committed people interested in exploring a career as a community organizer. Click [here](#) for more information.

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