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attention to: Governor Nikki Haley date: December 22, 2014

company: Concerned Citizens for the Red Caucuses company: Governor's Office

phone #: 803-743-3544 senders phone #: 803-734-2100

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complimentary fax cover sheet

**Concerned Citizens for the Poor Caucus**

Dr. Rubye J. Johnson, Leader  
101 Buckingham Blvd.  
Sumter, South Carolina 29153

**TO:** South Carolina State Legislators who represent citizens of these five counties: Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Richland and Sumter

**FROM:** Concerned Citizens for the Poor Caucus

**RE:** The dilemma of Wateree Community Actions, Inc. (WCAI) and its devastating effects on the poor and disadvantaged individuals, families and communities within the five counties served by WCAI: Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Richland and Sumter

**MESSAGE:** I am Rubye J. Johnson of Sumter, S.C., a former executive director of WCAI for several years, 1972 – 2006. I am one of the founding volunteers that helped establish WCAI in 1967. During these years WCAI was cited by Federal and non-Federal granters for excellence in services and compliance. Commendations were given WCAI from each of our South Carolina State Governors and several State Senators and Representatives. In November 2005, I was awarded by Governor Mark Sanford the distinguished State Order of the Palmetto. I am a Certified Community Action Professional and have served as an evaluator and trouble-shooting consultant for the Department of US Health and Human Services and the Department of US Community Services Administration. These qualifications, I trust, will entitle me to express to you our deep interest and concern about the current unstable condition of WCAI and its potential for lasting restoration and service delivery.

**THE PROBLEM:** The WCAI problem is manifold. For the sake of brevity, we will address a few:

1. **The lack of timely and sufficient oversight given to the WCAI Board (trustees).** This would entail applying foresight to detect precipitating problems, and insisting on prevention measures, or if the problem is already at hand “nip it in the bud” before it develops. For example, if the executive director has relatives on the board or staff, demand that this be corrected immediately because this is great potential for serious problems, and even more so, it is a violation of law. The employee manual and Board bylaws and manual should contain policy on nepotism and consequences for violating the policy.
- The lack of appropriate and sufficient board training is most essential to stabilizing the board. More time for training needs to be devoted to new board members. There is much to learn in order to be a confident and productive board member. Untrained board members are likely to become silent, inattentive and inert. With many of them like that, the board's required

We understand that:

- an invitation to participate in the problem solving process?

formula for that distribution. Shouldn't we the citizens have a voice, an opportunity to know and public funds from the Federal government that affect us. Our population is included in the People outside of our service area are in the loop discussing and making plans for distribution of communities have not been informed, yet what we are hearing is mostly about public funds. adversely at risk, if what we are hearing is true. Through the press nor any other media, our negatively affected. We have families, young children, jobs, healthcare, education and all undercover. We of the WCAI service area are directly affected by what we hear, I mean

**3. The citizens are wondering why the WCAI upheaval matter is being kept a secret or so**

some of the other problem community action agencies have been given.

vision and commitment to the poor, we feel that we should be given a second chance, just as administer. Based on our agency's potential and many years of good reputation, for know-how, So we plead to the Governor and all other powers that be that the funding remain for WCAI to said.

be helped and not hurt. Parceling out and diluting the funds and services would hurt us," she in our communities for a better quality of life of our poor. As one client expressed, "We want to our emergencies. We the citizens would lose ability to teamwork, network and get things done who are familiar with our community and our needs would not be available to readily help with would not be accessible to us. Most of our poor do not have transportation. The service staff services from other community action agencies, we would only get the crumbs. The services citizens also realize that by parceling out the funds expecting our poor to receive adequate citizens realize that the funds must be administered with prudence and accountability. We the the funds are necessary to provide services and support sorely needed by the poor. We the giving the funds to other community action agencies to administer. We the citizens realize that the Governor is contemplating removing the government funding for WCAI to administer and

**2. The citizens of our service areas, particularly the low income ones are fearing that the Office of**

responsibilities; misled and misinformed them and cojoked them into oblivion.

major staff persons. At WCAI it appears, the executive director assumed board duties and functioning and decision making is subject to being taken over by the executive director or other

- a. Agents from the HHS US Office of the Inspector General (OIG) have been investigating WCAI for the past seven months and have recently reported some findings to the Office of our State Governor.
  - b. A sizeable amount of funds is missing and misappropriated.
  - c. The WCAI executive director has recently been dismissed
  - d. The WCAI board has a new board Chairperson.
  - e. Employees are furloughed from their jobs temporarily.
  - f. WCAI is laden with delinquent debts.
  - g. Services to the poor and disadvantaged are temporarily ceased for the lack of funds.
  - h. The annual WCAI audit report 2013 is past due and could affect timely funding.
- We, the concerned citizens request to know facts of the WCAI problems. We request to participate in the analyzing of the problems, processing and planning for solving the problems and in applying defined solutions for a stronger, more productive and efficient administrative and programmatic operation at WCAI. We oppose any parceling out of funds which are due our area and poor population when our communities, leaders, poor people, local governments have not been made publicly aware.
- With the utmost of respect, we thank and appreciate our State governmental leadership, both legislative and executive, for their commitment to the bettering of lives of their less fortunate constituents.