Restoring the American Dream

FIXING MEDICARE PART D
Medicare Part D for prescription drugs was passed in 2003 by a Congress under the influence of the big drug and insurance companies. Working to fix Part D is a major priority of Citizen Action/Illinois (CA/IL). As leader of the “Medicare Education and Advocacy Campaign,” CA/IL, in partnership with the Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans and the Champaign County Health Care Consumers, organized more than a dozen community meetings in 2006. From Alton to Galesburg to Elk Grove Village, we worked to educate seniors, people with disabilities, and service providers about the new Medicare law. The Public Action Foundation (the research and education arm of CA/IL) produced and distributed a helpful guide for Medicare recipients entitled “A Quick Guide for Cautious Consumers” to warn people about the many challenges involved with enrolling in the Part D private insurance prescription drug plans. CA/IL supports fixing the Medicare prescription drug program to allow Medicare to negotiate for the best price on behalf of the 41 million Medicare beneficiaries in America, as well as offering a simple benefit under Medicare with negotiated prices.

EMERGENCY CAMPAIGN FOR AMERICA’S PRIORITIES
CA/IL led a broad-based coalition of unions, consumers, students, and social service agencies to stop President Bush and the Republican Congress from slashing important social programs—like Head Start, student loans, and healthcare—in order to give tax breaks to wealthy Americans.

INVESTING IN AMERICA’S FUTURE
In collaboration with our national organization, USAction, CA/IL is promoting a bold new campaign to recommit the nation to mainstream progressive goals and encourage investment in America’s most precious resource—our people. The newly launched campaign seeks to make responsible investments in education, health care and clean energy by rolling back tax breaks for corporate interests and taking steps to hold government more accountable. The Invest in America’s Future plan will help all of us achieve opportunity and prosperity in the globally competitive, knowledge-based economy of the 21st Century.

CAMPAIGN TO BUILD ILLINOIS TRANSIT
CA/IL won passage of the Business Location Efficiency Incentive Act (SB 2885) in June 2006. The new law makes Illinois the first state to intentionally use economic development subsidies to link jobs with public transit and/or affordable housing.

QUALITY, AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL
CA/IL is a leader of the Healthy Illinois Campaign. Healthy Illinois is an innovative public-private partnership that would allow the state to negotiate affordable premiums with private health insurers. In 2006, the Healthy Illinois Plan became one of five health care proposals that was chosen for further consideration and study by the Adequate Health Care Task Force set up by the state of Illinois. The statewide campaign is supported by more than 1,000 small businesses, elected officials, and community and labor groups. Our leading partner is “Americans for Healthcare Campaign”, a project of SEIU International.

FIGHTING FOR CONSUMER RIGHTS
CA/IL continues to monitor the Payday Loan Reform Act and its ability to effectively protect consumers who use payday loans in Illinois. In fall of 2006, the Public Action Foundation partnered with the Woodstock Institute to release a new study of payday lending debt collection practices in Illinois entitled “Hunting Down the Consumer”.

QUALITY LONG-TERM CARE
CA/IL and the Public Action Foundation continue to support the work of the Illinois Long Term Care Ombudsman Program that protects the rights of an estimated 131,000 elderly Illinois residents who live in long-term care facilities. We also promote the work of the Illinois Long Term Care Council.
FIGHTING FOR EXTENSION OF ELECTRIC RATE FREEZE
CA/IL was a leader in the effort to stop electric utility prices from rising 25-50% in 2007. Joining with the Citizens Utility Board and other allies we called on the Illinois General Assembly to extend the electric rate freeze for three years and ensure that electric rates will be subject to state oversight until at least 33 percent of residential customers are served by alternative suppliers.

PROTECTING OUR CIVIL JUSTICE SYSTEM
CA/IL joined with the Center for Justice & Democracy and medical malpractice survivors to call on Illinois lawmakers to repeal the cap that limits our access to a fair day in court. CA/IL supports our civil justice system as a fundamental check on the power of corporations and opposes special interest efforts to limit the legal rights of citizens.

HONORING PROGRESSIVE LEADERS
In September 2006 at our Annual Dinner, the Honorable Judge Abner J. Mikva received the annual Lerner-Egan Award for a lifetime of progressive leadership. Retiring State Representative Larry McKeon received a special award on behalf of his commitment to working people and consumers. At our Annual Convention in Peoria in December 2006, Ginny Nailing, a United Auto Workers Retiree and resident of Peoria, received the Milton Cohen Award for her thirty years of service working for a progressive agenda. Tracy Fischman, Vice-President of Public Policy for Planned Parenthood Chicago Area, received the Michael Aguilar Award for community organizing.

CREATING A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT
CA/IL joined with the American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago to launch the Illinois Campaign to Clean up Diesel Pollution. The campaign seeks to reduce local health risks from pollution caused by diesel vehicles.

SUPPORTING EDUCATION, STATE FUNDING and PROPERTY TAX RELIEF
CA/IL partnered with the Illinois Education Association, Communities for Quality Education and others to organize six roundtable discussions across Illinois which brought together students, teachers, administrators and community leaders to call for full and fair funding of Illinois schools and property tax relief.

2006 CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
CA/IL ran an extensive suburban political program that aimed to increase voter turnout among 30,000 single women by focusing on issues of healthcare, education, and tax cuts for the wealthy. We also worked to register over 5,000 people to vote in Chicago.

GET INVOLVED — JOIN OUR ACTION CENTER!
To join the CA/IL Action Center go to our website (www.citizenaction-il.org). At the ACTION CENTER you can sign up to receive action alerts from CA/IL and look-up your state and federal elected officials and send them a fax or email on important issues. Make your voice heard!

OUR NATIONAL PARTNER
CA/IL is an affiliate of USAction (www.usaction.org). USAction and its 24 state affiliates join together to win social, racial and economic justice for all. William McNary, co-director of Citizen Action/Illinois, has proudly served as President of USAction since 1999.