



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4

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J. LEE COMPTON
Chair

MICHELLE SOLOMON
Acting District Manager

April 28, 2006

Mayor Michael Bloomberg
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Work Requirement for Food Stamp Benefits

Mayor Michael Bloomberg:

We are writing to express our extreme disappointment in your decision not to apply for a waiver to the existing policy of suspending food stamps benefits for childless adults who fail to meet their work requirement.

As noted by many others, and as we have experienced within our own communities, there are many complex reasons why seemingly able-bodied adults may fail to meet the existing requirement. Encouraging work and independence does not necessitate removing all social and economic supports and indeed, achieving this goal and alleviating poverty, in this complex economy, often requires essential subsidies and supports. As we understand it, even under the waiver, the city would retain the right to terminate the food stamp benefit, if that was deemed justified – the termination simply would not be automatic but would allow for consideration of mitigating circumstances. We fail to see what possible rationale there could be for not wanting to retain that level of flexibility and options.

While we recognize there has been some general improvement in food stamp enrollment among those eligible, those numbers still remain disappointingly low overall. We strongly encourage you to establish policies and procedures that encourage, rather than discourage, access to basic food and nutrition among all low-income city residents as a basic right and necessity that reflects this city's long and proud tradition of helping those among us with the fewest resources and the greatest needs. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Lee Compton".

J. Lee Compton
Chair
Manhattan Community Board No. 4

cc: Local Elected Officials