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Statement of Susan Stamler Executive Director of United Neighborhood Houses of New York On New York State FY 2017- 2018 Enacted Budget

April 14, 2017 –The New York State FY 2017-2018 budget contains significant policy advances for young people, including reform to how juveniles are treated in the criminal justice system and the establishment of a scholarship program that will eventually make CUNY and SUNY tuition-free for certain students in households earning less than \$125,000 annually. However, United Neighborhood Houses (UNH) is disappointed that the State budget cut support for child care and failed to take meaningful steps toward addressing deficiencies in nonprofit human service contracts.

UNH's 38 member settlement houses are on the front lines serving more than 500,000 New Yorkers annually in programs that promote the health and wellbeing of children, youth, immigrants, older adults, and families of all kinds. Together, we crafted and proposed a policy agenda to the Governor and State legislature that would increase investments in child care, afterschool, and training/employment programs for youth; adult literacy classes and legal services for immigrants; older adult and behavioral health programs; and improvements in how State government contracts with nonprofits to deliver these services.

We are pleased to see increases in funding for *Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities*, an immigrant *Legal Aid Fund*, and the *Empire State Poverty Reduction Afterschool Initiative*. We credit the Governor and legislature for these smart investments that will allow older adults to continue living at home with dignity, afford immigrants with access to legal counsel and guidance, and provide for positive and engaging outlets for young adults. In addition, we appreciate that the Legislature restored funding to a number of key programs slated for cuts in the Executive Budget, including *Adult Literacy Education*, *Career Pathways*, and the *Settlement House Program*.

Unfortunately, several important programs lost funding in the final budget deal, including *Child Care Subsidies*, *Advantage Afterschool*, and the *Nonprofit Infrastructure Capital Investment Program*. In addition, UNH and our settlement houses strongly opposed and were able to help reverse the Governor's *Title XX* reform proposal, which would have redirected county discretionary funding currently used to support older adults, toward child care programs instead. In a budget of \$153 billion, pitting children against their grandparents was unnecessary and counterproductive.

Finally, UNH notes that as a member of the *Restore Opportunity Now Campaign*, we are disappointed that the State budget did not comprehensively address the significant underfunding of nonprofit human service contracts across the board. Settlement houses and other nonprofits provide critical services to their communities on behalf of the State and yet are routinely offered contracts that cover neither true costs or indirect rates, nor include inflation adjustments over time to reflect increased costs.

As New York State positions itself to be a bulwark for its residents against federal budget and policy threats, it should not undercut its own proactive policies and investments by disinvesting in or overlooking core human service programs.

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