



## **Economic Justice Task Force (EJTF) Annual Report**

**4/18/15**

### **Affordable Housing**

#### **Supreme Court Decision Upholding Mt Laurel and Overriding COAH**

The Economic Justice Task Force, along with other non-profits, faith-based advocacy groups, housing-related trade groups and concerned citizens gave testimony at the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) hearings on rules while Fair Share Housing Center (FSHC) challenged COAH in NJ Courts. Finally, in a unanimous decision issued March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the New Jersey Supreme Court reaffirmed that no town in New Jersey may exclude working families, low-income seniors, and people with special needs. The Court's decision responds to the failure of the Administration and the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) to comply with a court order issued in September 2013 requiring the adoption of rules that implement the *Mount Laurel* doctrine. Instead of COAH, the lower courts will fill their role in evaluating municipal compliance with Mount Laurel obligations. Municipalities must submit their plans for review.

#### **Foreclosure Recovery Legislation**

NJ has one of the highest rates of foreclosure in the U.S. Empty houses threaten the viability of communities and may, overtime, become areas dominated by high crime and crumbling structures. Legislature has responded by introducing and acting on 10 bills intended to help communities stem the tide of blight and during the rebuilding process, create affordable housing. A list of this legislation is included in your folder.

### **Wage Issues**

#### **Earned Sick Leave**

Many minimum wage, and/or part time workers are not paid if they need to take time off because of illness. This certainly places a burden on the worker, but also has important public health consequences. Thus the Earned Sick Leave bill (A2354/S785) has been widely supported by a coalition of unions, nonprofits, faith-based groups and concerned citizens. It has been reported out of the Assembly Budget Committee with Amendments. However there has been no action in Senate since 1/14/14.