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STATEMENT FROM DAVID R. JONES, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICE SOCIETY, ON MAYOR BLOOMBERG'S STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

The Community Service Society commends Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg for pledging to create at least a dozen more Career and Technical Education (CTE) high schools over the next two years. Using his annual State of the City address, the mayor said students enrolled in these schools would participate in "out-of-school internships" through partnerships with private sector employers.

There is a huge need to prepare young people for careers, given the abysmal rates of youth employment in the city. CTE schools have also been credited for boosting college enrollment, and for these reasons, high expectations surrounded the last mayoral commission set up to create them. Despite lofty talk back then, only three schools were established. We hope this new commitment to create more CTE schools is actually fulfilled.

We also applaud the mayor's support for the New York State Dream Act, which would allow children of undocumented immigrants to get state financial aid, and his call to expand summer youth employment opportunities with an emphasis on neighborhoods with the highest needs. On the housing front, the mayor pledged to reduce the backlog of repairs at NYCHA units and to create more affordable housing, pledges we fully endorse.

Finally, joining with Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, the mayor called for an increase to the minimum wage. While we are disappointed the mayor has not supported City Council-backed legislation establishing a living wage, we appreciate his support for raising the minimum wage. In acknowledging the need to raise the minimum wage, we hope the mayor also understands that employers should provide workers with basic conditions that enable them stay on the job. Specifically, mandating at least a minimum number of paid sick leave days a year, so that workers do not have to jeopardize their jobs and lose wages if they get the flu or a child gets sick, is a logical next step. By supporting this effort, the mayor would make it clear that improving the lives of thousands of hard-working New Yorkers will be a city-wide priority for 2012.

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For more than 165 years, the [Community Service Society of New York](http://www.cssny.org) has been the leading voice on behalf of low-income New Yorkers and continues to advocate for the economic security of the working poor in the nation's largest city. We respond to urgent, contemporary challenges with applied research, advocacy, litigation and innovative program models that help the working poor achieve a better quality of life and promote a more prosperous city.