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### **Statement by David R. Jones, President and CEO of the Community Service Society, on Mayor Bloomberg's City Campaign to Aid Black and Latino Youth**

New York, NY, August 4, 2011 -Today, Mayor Bloomberg took a bold and unique step forward in underscoring one of the city's most pressing needs – helping black and Latino young men in our city in the areas of education, employment, health and the criminal justice system. Through our own research and policy recommendations, the Community Service Society of New York has attempted to call attention to these issues and what they mean for all New Yorkers.

Consider this:

- More than 173,000 disconnected youth in the city – 16 to 24 years olds - are neither in school nor the labor force.
- Unemployment for the city's young black men (16 – 24 year olds) without a high school diploma was more than 50 percent in 2009-10.
- The New York City public high school graduation rate for black and Latino males is 50 percent; 70 percent for white and Asian males.

The focus on the recovery and other policy matters has meant that these issues have not received the attention they deserve from our policy makers, business leaders, and government officials. As a result, a large segment of our population – hundreds of thousands of black and Latino youth – are at risk of becoming a “lost generation” with all the economic and social problems that come with it.

With his announcement of a citywide campaign to assist black and Latino young men, the mayor acknowledged that the city has a responsibility to help black and Latino young men obtain job skills, complete their education, and choose paths other than those that lead to incarceration.

We applaud the mayor's leadership in making this issue an administration policy priority going forward, committing his own personal resources in the effort, and elevating the public discourse on disconnected youth. Specifically, he has singled out rethinking the

city's approach to probation, expansion of youth programs at public housing sites, and GED preparation.

And we hope that his efforts will lead to a robust discussion of other areas that deserve policy reform. These include using public assistance as a way to reconnect youth to education; using federal housing funds (under a requirement known as Section 3) to further expand job/training opportunities for youths in public housing and Section 8 voucher-assisted housing, where unemployment has tripled since the onset of the recession in late 2008; and figuring out how we take these much-needed initiatives to the scale required to have a truly significant impact on the scope of the problem.

We look forward to supporting Mayor Bloomberg's campaign as well as providing ongoing research and direct-service prototypes on these critically important issues that will define the future of hundreds of thousands of young black and Latino men in our city.

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*For 165 years, the [Community Service Society of New York](#) 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.*