



COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA

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CWDA

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Fewer Working Families, More Fraud, Less Protection *Governor's blue pencil targets services for families, elder and dependent adults*

SACRAMENTO – Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger today vetoed more than \$100 million from programs that move welfare recipients into the workforce, root out public assistance fraud, and protect elder and dependent adults from abuse and neglect.

County human services officials expressed shock at the cuts.

“These irrational vetoes will lead to fewer people working, hundreds of millions of dollars in federal penalties and leave vulnerable adults unprotected from criminals and scam artists,” said Chris Applegate, CWDA President and Director of Stanislaus County’s Community Services Agency. “It’s nonsensical to cut funding for services that save the state money by reducing dependency on welfare payments and stopping fraudulent activity.”

The vetoes included \$88 million from the CalWORKs program, California’s statewide welfare-to-work program, and \$11.4 million from the Adult Protective Services (APS) program, the only program that responds 24 hours a day, seven days a week to reports of abuse and neglect against elder and dependent adults. Counties operate both programs on behalf of the state. The cuts to APS are on top of \$13.1 million in cuts to other services for the aging.

“This is pretty basic math,” said Frank Mecca, CWDA Executive Director. “Cuts to programs that help people get to work mean less work and higher welfare payments. Cutting programs that detect and prosecute welfare fraud equals more fraudulent payments out the door.”

In CalWORKs, any cuts to welfare-to-work services also make California highly vulnerable to penalties. States must meet a 50 percent federal work participation rate in their welfare programs or face stiff sanctions – as much as \$149 million for California, increasing by \$70 million each year the state is out of compliance. Under current law, counties and the state share these penalties 50-50.

“Once again, the Governor has gone back on a deal. Counties accepted a larger share of potential CalWORKs penalties in exchange for a commitment that the Administration would fund us properly to do this work,” said Elliott Robinson, CWDA Vice President of Administration and Director of the Monterey County Department of Social and Employment Services. “How can counties help the state head off penalties after a cut of this magnitude?”

The CalWORKs cuts come after the Schwarzenegger Administration proposed numerous programmatic changes to the program earlier in the year, with the stated goal of meeting the federal participation rate and avoiding penalties.

“There’s been a lot of talk about getting more CalWORKs families into the workforce, but the Governor doesn’t walk the walk,” said Trent Rhorer, a Past President of CWDA and Executive Director of Human Services for the City and County of San Francisco. “All these cuts do is reduce our chances of meeting the federal requirements, getting people back to work and rooting out fraudulent activity.”

In APS, the Governor slashed 10 percent from a state-mandated program to protect elder and dependent adults who have been physically or mentally abused, financially abused, or neglected. The program was not fully funded when it was created in 1999, and funding has been frozen since 2002-03, seriously eroding counties’ ability to respond to these emergency situations. The cut will leave counties unable to fully respond to 18,775 reports of abuse and neglect, putting the lives of elder and dependent adults at risk.

“It’s another example of cuts in one area leading to costs in another,” said Cathi Grams, incoming President of CWDA and Director of Employment and Social Services in Butte County. “Law enforcement, hospitals, and nursing homes are going to see these same people when their conditions are worse and much more expensive. And they will be the lucky ones – studies show that elder abuse victims are three times more likely to die than the average senior. The human toll of these cuts cannot be overstated.”

CWDA is a non-profit association representing the human service directors from each of California’s 58 counties. The Association’s mission is to promote a human services system that encourages self-sufficiency of families and communities and protects vulnerable children and adults from abuse and neglect.

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