



## County Welfare Directors Association of California

925 L Street, Suite 350, Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 443-1749

Frank J. Mecca, Executive Director

Washington, DC Office  
Tom Joseph  
Waterman & Associates  
900 Second Street NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 898-1444  
tj@wafed.com

**To:** County Welfare Directors Association of California

**From:** Tom Joseph, Director, CWDA Washington, D.C. Office

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**Re:** Federal Update

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Congress has returned and is focused on the impending February 29 expiration of the 'extenders' law continuing the payroll tax cut, extended unemployment insurance benefits and Medicare payments to physicians. The TANF program is also attached to the bill (HR 3630). House and Senate conferees are meeting frequently to find compromises, but the major barrier is agreeing upon how to pay for the provisions. In an effort to shape policy within HR 3630, the House last week adopted a bill to prohibit TANF EBT transactions in adult entertainment venues (see below for further information).

The Administration has delayed the submission of its proposed FFY 2013 budget until February 13. CWDA will distribute a quick analysis the Administration's health and human services policy and spending proposals soon after it is released.

**TANF Reauthorization:** Last week, the House passed 395-27 a TANF provision restricting beneficiaries' access to TANF cash benefits at ATMs or other EBT transaction machines located in adult entertainment venues. This was the second time in as many months that the House approved the provision. This time the provision was adopted so that the conferees to the extenders measure could consider adding it to that bill.

CWDA and the Western Center on Law & Poverty worked with Congress to ensure that the provision did not affect California's current policies and procedures related to EBT use by CalWORKS beneficiaries. House Minority staff also contacted CWDA to obtain information documenting the miniscule amount of benefits accessed in adult entertainment venues prior to the LA Times stories and subsequent Executive Order S-09-10 signed by Governor Schwarzenegger in June 2010. Some of the information provided by CWDA was used in floor statements during the debate.

Among the individuals voting against the measure were seven California House members who essentially argued that the provision was a mean-spirited one used to stereotype TANF recipients and meant to score political points. Those members were: Reps. Bass, Honda, Lee, Linda Sanchez, Stark, Waters and Woolsey.

Both Democrats and Republicans support a continuation of TANF through the end of the federal fiscal year. It remains unclear, however, whether Congress will undertake a more comprehensive review of the program later this year.

**SNAP Reauthorization:** The Farm Bill is due for reauthorization this year. Included in that review is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The Senate Agriculture Committee has jurisdiction over the Farm Bill and has announced an initial series of hearings, with four slated between mid-February and the end of March. None of the first series, however, directly address SNAP. The Senate Committee intends to mark up a bill in the spring. The House is expected to follow the Senate's lead, given the upper chamber's difficulty in moving legislation.

The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) has formed a group of advocates to lobby on nutrition issues. CWDA attended a briefing earlier this year and intends to participate in that group as appropriate.