



CWDA
Advancing Human Services
for the Welfare of *All* Californians



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Assembly Budget Committee Makes Ending Child Poverty a Priority

Action Taken to End Maximum Family Grant (MFG) Rule | Myth-Driven Law that Plunges More Children into Poverty

SACRAMENTO—Today marked a critical step in ensuring children living at the deepest levels of poverty are no longer subject to a classist, racist, myth-driven law and are eligible for assistance to help them and their families build better lives.

The Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Health and Human Services took action to repeal the Maximum Family Grant (MFG) policy in the CalWORKs program. Under current law, a child born into a family receiving assistance through the CalWORKs program is not eligible for assistance unless the pregnancy is the result of rape, incest or a failure in contraception.

“The Maximum Family Grant rule has served only one purpose – pushing more children deeper into poverty,” said Frank Mecca, CWDA Executive Director. “With one in five children in California living in poverty, repealing the MFG rule and taking other policy actions that improve families’ economic situations are how we give children a chance at a decent life and end the generational cycle of poverty. We are grateful for the leadership of Asm. Tony Thurmond, Speaker Anthony Rendon and Sen. Holly Mitchell – the long-time champion of repealing the MFG rule – for making this proposal a priority.”

“The repeal of the Maximum Family Grant continues to be our priority and a priority of a growing, diverse coalition who are concerned about childhood deep poverty and the overreach of government into the reproductive privacy of families,” said Jessica Bartholow of the Western Center on Law and Poverty. “The budget action to be taken would achieve the repeal while also addressing the Governor’s concern about ongoing cost pressures to

Press Release

County Welfare Directors Association of California

the general fund. We are very grateful for the leadership of both budget chairs.”

Repealing the MFG policy would provide benefits to an estimated 130,000 children in 95,000 families across the state. The additional benefits will be supported through an ongoing funding source outside of the General Fund, as noted in a [report](#) prepared for members of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee.

The proposal to repeal the MFG proposal is noted as “high priority” in that same report, recognizing the MFG policy only harms poor children and their families while also violating a mother’s privacy and seeking to control her reproductive decisions. Attempts to repeal the law in previous years have received bipartisan support in the Legislature.

The committee also took action to provide a 4 percent increase to CalWORKs grants. A [recent analysis](#) by the California Budget & Policy Center found that the maximum grant a family might receive through CalWORKs is not enough to cover the fair market rent for even a one-bedroom apartment in most of the state’s 58 counties, and the meager wages earned by the majority of CalWORKs parents don’t go far enough to make up the difference. [Another analysis](#) by the Budget Center found a single mother with two kids would have to work 2.9 full-time minimum-wage jobs – nearly 120 hours a week – to afford a two-bedroom apartment.

Both the repeal of the MFG rule and the grant increase are proposed to take effect January 1, 2017.

CWDA, the Western Center on Law and Poverty and the many other statewide and local organizations who have tirelessly fought to repeal the MFG policy look forward to working with Senate leaders on the proposal and seeing the Senate Budget Subcommittee on Health and Human Services Committee take similar action to lift more children out of poverty.

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