



County Welfare Directors Association of California

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

Frank J. Mecca, Executive Director

CWDA

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

Congress returned from its summer recess today. There are only 12 days this month where both houses will be in session at the same time, and most of this week will revolve around debate on the Iran nuclear agreement. Given the narrow legislative window in September, there is no likelihood that any of the 12 federal fiscal year (FFY) 2016 spending measures will be enacted into law. While there is some speculation in the press that a government shutdown may occur, the Republican leadership in both the House and Senate are committed to ensuring that such a scenario is not realized. Instead, Congress is likely to adopt a spending measure near the end of the month that would fund the government into the fall. The measure will also include temporary extensions of a wide range of federal programs needing reauthorization, including the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

TANF Reauthorization: Last month's federal update outlined a number of provisions in the House TANF reauthorization discussion draft. The Ways and Means Committee has not announced any further hearings or a markup, but indications in August were that the committee would attempt to move a bipartisan bill this fall.

As noted previously, the draft makes positive changes in the types and duration of activities for TANF recipients which would qualify as work participation. In turn, the draft makes it more difficult for states to meet federal work participation mandates by eliminating the use of non-governmental third-party expenditures from counting toward a state's Maintenance of Effort (MOE) and by disallowing spending for medical services as countable toward the MOE.

Most problematic for California and its counties is the discussion draft provision which has the effect of prohibiting the use of the WINS program for purposes of counting eligible working families towards the Work Participation Rate (WPR). Indeed, the number of adult recipients on aid in September 2014 was 275,900 and it increased to 504,318 the next month when WINS was implemented. Given the proposed draft discussion language on the new standards for meeting a new federal WPR, it is unlikely that the state would be able to meet the WPR.

CWDA is exploring legislative options and strategy with California's Department of Social Services, the American Public Human Services Association and the National Association of County Human Services Administrators.

Family Stability and Kinship Care Act (S. 1964): Before the August recess, Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-OR) introduced the *Family Stability and Kinship Care Act* (S. 1964) that would make fundamental changes to child welfare financing by providing a federal IV-E foster care match for prevention and post-permanency services. Seven of the 11 Committee Democrats joined as original co-sponsors. The August federal update provided some details on the bill.

Given that the Senate has been in recess since that time, the Senate Finance Committee has not taken any further action.