

Contact: Hannah Greene
Direct Line: 510-272-6768
Cell: 510-220-3866
hannah.greene@acgov.org

1221 Oak Street, Suite 536
Oakland, CA 94612
Main: 510-272-6695
Fax: 510-271-5151

Alameda County
Supervisor Keith Carson, Fifth District

For Immediate Release
Press Release

Thursday January 27, 2011

Residents and County Officials Express Concerns about Budget Impacts to Alameda County

Oakland, CA—A low-income family of three would lose \$75 of cash assistance per month under Governor Jerry Brown's plan to slash \$1.5 billion from the CalWORKs welfare to work program. \$75 buys approximately one week of groceries for a mother and two small children, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The Governor's budget proposal would disproportionately cut spending for Health and Human Services programs. This message was driven home by Jean Ross, Executive Director of the California Budget Project, at a presentation at the January 25, 2011 meeting of the Alameda County Budget Workgroup, chaired by Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson. Although roughly 30% of current State spending goes to Health and Human Services, more than 50% of the Governor's proposed cuts target those programs, which are largely delivered at the local level.

"It appears that Governor Jerry Brown's proposed budget represents the first time the deficit has been approached from a structural perspective rather than the smoke and mirrors 'solutions' of the past," noted Supervisor Carson. "County governments are cautious about the proposal, especially the shift of services from the State to counties. The devil is in the details and we are eager to see those details."

Ms. Ross, whose organization focuses on fiscal analysis and public education, addressed a group of elected officials, department heads and representatives from labor and community-based organizations. Despite Ms. Ross' "perverse optimism" that the Governor's budget is "the most honest in the last 20 years," Alameda County officials and department heads expressed concern about the details of his proposal to shift State services to the County level.

Cuts in Sacramento will have significant consequences for children and families, according to Alameda County Health Services Agency. 20,400 families in Alameda County currently use the Healthy Families program to purchase low-cost health insurance for their children or teens. Many of these families simply cannot afford to pay for the Governor's proposed increases in premiums and co-payments. When their children fall sick, they will either delay doctor's visits or show up at the emergency room anyway, where the County will be forced to pick up the tab.

Concerns over these hidden cost shifts also arose Wednesday at a meeting of the Asian Community Collaborative (ACC), an initiative run by Supervisor Carson's Office. Representatives from community based organizations serving the Asian Pacific Islander community gathered to hear a budget update from Supervisor Carson and Nicole Wordelman, a staff member with the County's State lobbyist Suter, Walluch, Corbett & Associates. Both speakers encouraged service providers to begin advocating immediately in a unified voice to give Legislators a full picture of the real human cost of budget reductions.

Budget hearings are already underway in Sacramento as lawmakers rush to meet the Governor's March deadline for a budget package. Alameda County will continue to offer the public information at a series of Budget Workgroup meetings and budget forums. For more information about the County Budget process, please call 510-272-6695 or visit <http://www.acgov.org/board/district5/>

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Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson represents the Fifth District, which includes Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Piedmont, and the communities of West Oakland, North Oakland, Rockridge, Grand Lake, Fruitvale, and the Dimond District.