

Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

March 30, 2016

OLDER AMERICANS ACT

We continued to work with the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (N4A) and other stakeholders to urge the House to take action on legislation to reauthorize the Older Americans Act. Last year, the Senate unanimously approved a bipartisan measure to reauthorize the Act as S. 192, the *Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act*, and we urged the House committee of jurisdiction to either take up the Senate bill or expedite work on their own version. Yesterday, the House approved a slightly modified version of S. 192 by unanimous consent. The House-passed version reflects a compromise reached between Education and the Workforce Committee Chairman Kline (R-MN) and Ranking Member Scott (D-VA) that maintains the bipartisan nature of the proposal. The changes must now be approved by the Senate, which is expected to vote on the bill when it returns from the spring recess in April.

FY 2017 APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

The various House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees have begun holding hearings in anticipation of drafting their respective FY 2017 spending bills later in the spring, and we have urged the local Congressional delegation, including Senators Boxer and Feinstein, to sign on to a variety of "Dear Colleague" letters to the appropriators in support of specific programs of significance to the County. These have included the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), SCAAP, PILT, and a variety of public safety programs.

The Department of Homeland Security is traditionally one of the first appropriations bills to be taken up, and we contacted both the House and Senate Homeland Security Subcommittees to advocate for the County's priorities in the measure, including State and Local Homeland Security Grants, Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG), and the Firefighter Assistance Grants program. As in recent years, the Administration's FY 2017

Budget Request for FEMA once again proposes to consolidate funding for State and local preparedness and response programs, which would result in an overall 35% reduction in funding for those programs, including a 57% cut for the State Homeland Security Grants program (SHSGP). SHSGP is used for funding local public safety and disaster planning, equipment, training and exercises in California. We are urging the appropriators to once again reject the Administration's proposal.

HOMELESS FUNDING

Last fall, we provided the County with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Notice of Funding Availability for the FY 2015 Continuum of Care Program Competition. HUD Secretary Castro recently announced \$1.6 billion in CoC grants to support nearly 6,400 local homeless housing and service programs across the country. We were informed that stakeholders in Santa Barbara County will receive a total of \$1.3 million in CoC funding. This funding can be used for street outreach, client assessment, and direct housing assistance. The overall funding was \$200 million less than in the previous year, with 2000 less awards being made.

SOCIAL SERVICES FUNDING

House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Brady (R-TX) recently introduced H.R. 4724, the *Reducing Duplicative and Ineffective Federal Funding Act*, which would repeal the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG). The State of California receives approximately \$190 million from SSBG, which it combines with TANF monies as a funding stream for a variety of local social services programs. The Committee marked up and approved H.R. 4724 on March 16, and it has now issued its report to accompany the bill, clearing it for floor action. We have asked Congresswoman Capps to oppose the measure when it is considered by the full House.

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