

Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

July 5, 2016

MENTAL HEALTH REFORM

We continued to closely monitor action on Congressman Murphy's (R-PA) H.R. 2646, the *Helping Families in Mental Crisis Act*, which would make available needed psychiatric, psychological, and supportive services for individuals with mental illness and families in crisis. While the measure initially had broad bipartisan support, concerns developed primarily amongst Democrats regarding privacy protections and court-ordered treatment. When the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health marked up the bill last November, it was approved along party lines. Since then, the two sides continued to work towards resolution of the issues, and on June 15 the full Energy and Commerce Committee marked up and unanimously approved the bill. It is currently pending the Committee's Report to accompany its action.

FOSTER CARE

After its introduction on June 13, we provided County staff with H.R. 5456, the *Family First Prevention Services Act*, which would amend Title IV of the Social Security Act to invest in funding prevention and family services. The measure is intended to ensure that children in foster care are placed in the least restrictive, most family-like, and appropriate settings. While H.R. 5456 has broad bipartisan and bicameral support in Congress, the California State Department of Social Services, CWDA and CSAC all expressed concerns with provisions of the bill regarding congregate care that would conflict with efforts under way in California. However, the bill was approved unanimously by the House on June 21 and sent to the Senate. The measure was placed directly on the Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders, which means that it can be brought up at any time for floor debate. Other States such as New York are now expressing similar concerns to those expressed by California, but it is unclear if any changes can be made before it is considered by the full Senate.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FUNDING

As the Independence Day recess approached, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees continued their work on FY 2017 spending bills. When the Senate committee drafted its version of the *FY 2017 Homeland Security Appropriations* bill, it once again rejected the Administration's proposal to condense all State and Local Programs into a single National Preparedness Grant Program (NPGP). The committee provided a total of \$1.54 billion for State and Local Programs, including \$467 million for State and Local Homeland Security Grants. It proposed \$680 million for Firefighter Assistance Grants, \$350 million for Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG), and \$100 million for the National Pre-Disaster Mitigation Fund, all the same as was provided in FY 2016. The House Appropriations Committee also rejected the Administration's NPGP proposal. The House bill proposes a total of \$1.27 billion for State and Local Programs, including level funding of \$467 million for State and Local Homeland Security Grants. It would allocate \$690 million for Firefighter Assistance Grants and \$350 million for EMPG, but would reduce the National Pre-Disaster Mitigation Fund to \$54.5 million, as requested by the Administration.

PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING

The *FY 2017 Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations* bill drafted by the Senate Appropriations Committee would provide essentially level funding of \$1.49 billion for community health centers, increase substance abuse block grants by \$8 million to \$1.86 billion, and fund the Section 112 Immunization program at \$610.8 million, the same as in FY 2016. It would increase funding for mental health block grants by \$30 million to \$541.5 million, and provide level funding for preventative health services block grants at \$160 million. It would also provide \$900 million for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), the same as in FY 2016, a slight increase of \$3.6 million to \$641.7 million for the

Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, and \$660 million for Public Health Preparedness Cooperative Agreements.

SOCIAL SERVICES AND AGING

The *FY 2017 Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations* bill drafted in the Senate would also provide \$1.7 billion for Title XX Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) and \$715 million for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), both at the same level as FY 2016. The Low Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) formula grants would be funded at the current year's level of \$3.39 billion. In addition, the measure would provide \$1.38 billion in grants to States for Aging-related programs, including \$347.7 million for supportive services and senior centers, and \$21 million for grants to States for protection of vulnerable older Americans.

PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees have both also completed drafting of the *FY 2017 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations* bill. Both committees included \$480 million for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program, a \$28 million increase to ensure full funding for FY 2017 PILT payments. The Department of Interior recently announced that Santa Barbara County is receiving \$1,823,626 from PILT for FY 2016, a \$170,000 increase.

JUSTICE FOR ALL ACT

We contacted the Senate Judiciary Committee regarding Senator Cornyn's (R-TX) S. 2577, the *Justice For All Act Reauthorization Act of 2016*. In addition to extending the authorization of a variety of programs implemented in the original Act - including the Crime Victims' Rights Act and the Coverdell Forensics Science Improvement Grant Program – the bill includes provisions intended to eliminate the substantial backlog of DNA and other forensic evidence samples, improve and expand the forensic science testing capacity of State and local crime laboratories; develop new training programs regarding the collection and use of forensic evidence, and improve the performance of counsel in state capital cases. S. 2577 was reported out favorably by the committee and subsequently approved by the full Senate by voice vote on June 16. It has been forwarded to the House, where Congressman Poe (R-TX) has introduced companion legislation as H.R. 4602.

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