

# Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

May 26, 2017

## FY 2018 APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

After President Trump completed the current year's funding process by signing into law the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017, we immediately began focusing on FY 2018 funding, contacting the various House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees and our House and Senate delegation members to advocate in support of the myriad of Federal programs and funding streams that impact the County's responsibilities. We emphasized the need to fund these programs at the highest levels possible so that local services are not disrupted, and in particular highlighted the numerous programs of significance to the County that President Trump proposed eliminating or drastically reducing funding for in his "Skinny Budget" released in March. The Administration's full FY 2018 Budget Proposal was released on May 23, and while there were not significant changes to the funding levels proposed previously, there was significantly more detail, as well as legislative proposals that go beyond the annual appropriations process. For example, the document specifically proposed programmatic changes aimed at significantly reducing funding for mandatory programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and Medicaid. While the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees have started hearings, they are significantly behind schedule and there is concern that the process will once again bog down before the October 1 start of the new Fiscal Year. Appropriators have recently floated the idea of focusing on a single omnibus FY 2018 Appropriations package from the start, rather than trying to move individual funding bills.

## AFFORDABLE CARE ACT REPEAL

After a package of compromise floor amendments enabled the House Republican Leadership to cobble together enough votes from centrists and hard-right members of the Republi-

can Conference to pass H.R. 1628, the *American Health Care Act*, efforts on legislation to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) have moved to the Senate. The Senate version of the legislation is expected to evolve much more slowly and cautiously than it did in the House, as even many Senate Republicans reject prominent elements of the House bill, including allowing States to opt out of essential benefits, potentially higher rates for people with pre-existing conditions, the structure of tax credits as subsidies for health insurance and the ramping back of ACA Medicaid expansion provisions. A critical element was the much-anticipated release of an updated scoring of the House bill by the Congressional Budget Office. The House passed its bill without an updated scoring of the impacts of the bill reflecting the last minute amendments, and the subsequent release of CBO's updated analysis showed little change from the original bill – the potential for up to 23 million people to become uninsured, and overall savings of \$119 billion over a decade. Staff from the 3 Senate committees of jurisdiction are to begin working on an initial draft over the Memorial Day recess.

The arrival in the Senate of the *American Health Care Act* also affected action on other crucial health care legislation. For example, the Senate Finance Committee recently indefinitely postponed hearings on reauthorization of the Children Health Insurance Program.

## JUVENILE JUSTICE

In anticipation of action by the House Committee on Education and the Workforce we reiterated the County's support for Federal resources to assist local government agencies in addressing juvenile justice and delinquency prevention needs in the community. On May 4, the Committee issued its Report to accompany Congressman Lewis' (R-MN) H.R. 1809, the *Juvenile Justice Reform Act*, bipartisan legislation to reauthorize and update the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, including providing more flexibility to states

and local communities to best meet the needs of delinquent youth and improve public safety. H.R. 1809 is scheduled to be considered by the full House later this week. In the Senate, Judiciary Committee Chairman Grassley (R-IA) recently introduced S. 860, the *Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization Act*, to reauthorize and improve the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act through 2021. Chairman Grassley has not yet scheduled a markup of S. 860.

#### **ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS**

We contacted the Senate Committee on Homeland Security in support of legislation to reauthorize the Assistance to Firefighters Grants program, and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant Program. On May 17, the committee marked up and approved Senator McCain's (R-AZ) S. 829, the *AFG and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017*. In addition to reauthorizing these programs through FY 2023, the measure would make certain modifications to them, including authorizing the use of AFG Program grants to provide specialized training to first responders on how to recognize and properly intervene with individuals with mental illness.

#### **INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING**

We participated in NACo's Infrastructure Week Fly-In, attending the Big 7 Briefing on Capitol Hill as well as the Roundtable that followed. The events emphasized the critical role that counties play in the nation's infrastructure, and focused on dedicated funding for locally owned infrastructure, project streamlining, tax-exempt municipal bonds, wastewater needs, and expansion of broadband. Subsequently, the Administration issued a document accompanying its FY 2018 budget proposal that outlines the principles for its \$1 trillion infrastructure initiative. While specifics are still to come, the document affords insight into the types of activities the President's infrastructure initiative will include, and we provided it to County staff for analysis. There is a particular emphasis on utilizing targeted Federal investments to incentivize non-Federal resources – including the private sector – and encourage local self-help efforts.

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