

Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

MAY 29, 2018

FEDERAL BUDGET

After conducting hearings throughout the spring on President Trump's FY 2019 Budget Proposal, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees are moving ahead with drafting their funding bills. In the House, six of the 12 annual spending bills have been reported out of committee and leaders plan to start packaging the measures together in "mini-buses" to expedite consideration and maintain the momentum on funding bills.

The Senate Appropriations Committee has also announced a schedule of mark ups of its versions of the bills over the coming weeks and Majority Leader McConnell (R-KY) is planning floor votes this summer. The pace of work in both chambers is a significant improvement compared to recent years when Congress has struggled to get any appropriations bills enacted before the start of the new Federal fiscal year on October 1.

TANF REAUTHORIZATION

We are coordinating with NACo and CWDA on reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. House Ways and Means Republicans released a discussion draft of welfare reform legislation in mid-May, which we provided to County staff for their review. H.R. 5861, the *Joining Opportunity with Benefits and Services for Success (JOBS) Act*, would reauthorize TANF for five years through FY 2023 and fund child care and job training programs. The draft also includes provisions to establish a universal work requirement, establish an outcome-based performance accountability system, and restrict eligibility to recipients whose monthly income is below 200% of the federal poverty level. The Committee approved the bill on a party-line vote just before Congress recessed for the Memorial Day break and consideration by the full House is expected in June.

FARM BILL/NUTRITION PROGRAMS

The House voted 198-213 to defeat the Republican Farm bill, H.R. 2, the *Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018*, on May 18. No Democrats voted for the bill, primarily because of proposed limits on eligibility and greater emphasis on work requirements for able-bodied adults receiving food aid through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). However, 30 Republicans also voted against the bill to pressure House leaders to schedule a vote on a conservative immigration package. Speaker Ryan (R-WI) hopes to reconsider the vote, but there is no agreement at this point that would lead to passage. Even if an immigration agreement results in House passage of H.R. 2, the Senate will take a much different and more conciliatory approach and merging the two bills would make it difficult to get a multi-year Farm Bill enacted this year.

HOMELESS FUNDING

Last year, we provided the County with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Notice of Funding Availability for the FY 2017 Continuum of Care Program Competition. The Department recently awarded 7,328 recipients a total of \$2.01 billion to address the housing and service needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. We were informed that stakeholders in Santa Barbara County will receive a total of \$1.6 million in CoC funding.

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT

Committees in both the House and the Senate recently approved separate bills to authorize Army Corps of Engineers projects and policies. The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee approved S. 2800, the *America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018*, on May 22 and the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved H.R. 8, the *Water*

Resources Development Act of 2018, the following day. Both bills have bipartisan support and do not include the changes to environmental permitting processes that President Trump proposed in his infrastructure bill. Both bills would de-authorize older projects that have not moved into the construction phase at the Army Corps, but as currently written these provisions would not impact projects in the County such as Lower Mission Creek.

INMATE HEALTH CARE COSTS

We contacted the House Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means to urge action on Congressman Hastings' (D-FL) H.R. 165, the *Restoring the Partnership for County Health Care Costs Act*. H.R. 165 would remove the so-called "inmate exception" that prevents individuals in the County's jail awaiting trial from being eligible for a variety of Federal benefits, including Medicaid, Medicare, SSI and CHIP. Estimates of the number of non-adjudicated inmates who would otherwise be eligible for these benefits vary, but reinstatement of their eligibility would have a significant impact on the County's costs for inmate health care. Hearings on the bill have not yet been scheduled by either committee.

OPIOID CRISIS

Response to the opioid crisis continues to be a priority in both the House and the Senate and several committees marked up a myriad of related bills during May.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee approved a total of 57 bills in two separate markups that would strengthen prevention and public health efforts and address coverage and payment issues in Medicare and Medicaid. Many of the bills are narrow modifications to programs to improve effectiveness or provide direction/authorities to Federal agencies. The House Ways and Means Committee also approved four bills that would address opioid issues in the portions of the Medicare program that are under the Committee's jurisdiction.

Earlier in the month, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions approved Chairman Alexander's (R-TN) S. 2680, the *Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018*. The bill includes numerous provisions to prevent or treat opioid abuse, focusing on the Committee's jurisdiction overseeing Federal health agencies such as FDA, NIH, and CDC. Among these provisions, the bill would reauthorize for three more years grants to states for prevention, response, and treatment originally authorized in the 21st Century Cures Act.

The Senate Judiciary Committee approved five bills on May 24, including S. 2789, the *Substance Abuse Prevention Act of 2018*, which would reauthorize the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and several other related programs such as the Drug Free Communities Support Program, and DOJ's drug court program.

We have provided information on the pending opioid legislation to County staff for their review as it is developed and continue to work in coordination with NACo to monitor for any impacts on the County. House Majority Leader McCarthy (R-CA) is working to package together the opioid crisis legislation for consideration by the House in June and the Senate is also expected to devote floor time to the issue this summer.