

Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

February 25, 2019

BUDGET

The annual appropriations process typically begins with the release of the President's Budget Request in early February. However, the recent budget impasse and partial government shutdown delayed this process and President Trump is not expected to release his FY 2020 proposal until sometime in March. Nonetheless, House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees are beginning to hold hearings and members of the House and Senate will soon begin weighing in with their budget priorities for the coming fiscal year. In addition, Congressional leaders are beginning to focus on the impending expiration of the current budget caps on October 1, which would result in across-the-board spending cuts of approximately 10 percent of discretionary spending if not amended through budget legislation. We are working in coordination with other local government stakeholders to advocate for the County's funding priorities in the annual appropriations bills.

IMMIGRATION

We contacted the House and Senate Judiciary Committees and the local delegation to reiterate the County's support for bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform, including an earned path to citizenship, continuation of protections provided under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, opposition to the forceful separation of families without due process or a plan for reunification, and opposition to any unfunded federal mandates or any mandates on counties to enforce immigration laws.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Graham (R-SC) has not yet reintroduced his bipartisan DACA bill from the 115th Congress, instead proposing S. 166, which would pair temporary Dreamer protections with mandatory border wall funding. On February 15, President Trump

declared a national emergency on the border in order to divert federal funds to the building of a wall. In response, the House is expected to pass H.J.Res. 46 this week, which includes provisions to terminate the emergency declaration. So far, however, there does not appear to be enough votes for the resolution to pass the Senate.

TANF REAUTHORIZATION

We are continuing to work in coordination with NACo, CWDA and other stakeholders in support of a multi-year reauthorization for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. We have urged our local delegation and the Senate Finance and House Ways and Means Committees to support TANF legislation that would increase funding for child care, job training and other aspects of the program and also provide California more flexibility in the administration of the program. H.R. 430 was enacted in January to provide the latest in a series of short-term extensions for the program – this time through June 30 – which is intended to allow Congress more time to draft a comprehensive bill.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

The current authorization for federal Community Health Centers will expire on October 1 and we recently contacted the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee in support of efforts to extend the program. The Federally Qualified Health Center Program funds services that are a critical component of the health care safety net. Federal funding is used to provide care to low-income individuals or individuals located in areas with few health care providers. HELP Committee Chair Alexander (R-TN) and Ranking Member Murray (D-WA) recently introduced S. 192, the *Community and Public Health Programs Extension Act*, which would provide five years of mandatory funding for the Community Health Center

Fund. In addition to urging that the Committee take action on legislation like S. 192, we also contacted Senators Harris and Feinstein to request their ongoing support for the program.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

We urged the House and Senate Judiciary Committees to move legislation to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), citing the importance of these resources to local law enforcement officials for combatting domestic violence and protecting victims. We also contacted the local delegation and urged them to work with the Committees to expedite reauthorization legislation. Most VAWA program authorizations expired in December and an extension or multi-year reauthorization is needed to provide stability to these programs.

GUN CONTROL

The House is scheduled to vote this week on two bills to strengthen federal gun control. H.R. 8, the *Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019*, would require background checks on all firearm sales, including private sales, and require listing all those prohibited from buying a firearm in the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. H.R. 1112, the *Enhanced Background Checks Act of 2019*, would change the current requirement that allows the sale of a firearm to proceed if a background check is not completed within three days. Representative Carbajal is a cosponsor of H.R. 8. In addition, he recently re-introduced his *Extreme Risk Protection Order Act* as H.R. 1236, which would encourage states to allow family members or law enforcement officials to petition a judge to temporarily remove firearms from an individual in crisis.

LAND/WATER CONSERVATION FUND

The full Senate passed Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chair Murkowski's (R-AK) S. 47, the *Natural Resources Management Act*, on February 12. The legislation is an omnibus package of public lands bills that includes a bipartisan proposal for permanent reauthorization of the LWCF and includes a provision requiring that at least 40 percent of

the money in the Fund be used for state projects. The package has the support of House Democratic leaders, who have scheduled it for a floor vote tomorrow.

CLIMATE CHANGE

House Committees have started holding hearings related to climate change to document the impacts of rising greenhouse gas levels and how the federal government should take action. The Energy and Commerce Committee held a hearing on February 6 titled, *Climate Change: Impacts and the Need to Act*, and the Natural Resources Committee held a hearing the same day titled, *Time for Action: Addressing the Environmental and Economic Effects of Climate Change*. House Democrats have also established a Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, which will be holding hearings, although the Select Committee has not been given legislative authority or subpoena power.

Representative Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) and Senator Markey (D-MA) have introduced the *Green New Deal Resolution* as H.Res. 109 and S.Res. 59, to outline their goals to respond to climate change and make all sectors of the U.S. economy resilient and sustainable. The resolution sets out the parameters of the proposed ten-year plan to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate change impacts through a comprehensive outline that includes investing in infrastructure, renewable and zero-emission energy, energy efficiency, clean manufacturing, environmental justice, and ecosystem restoration. If the resolution is adopted by the House and the Senate, the goals in the outline would require extensive follow-up legislation to develop the programs and regulations to implement the concepts.

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