

Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

March 25, 2019

BUDGET

President Trump sent his Budget Proposal for FY 2020 to Congress on March 11. The Congressional Budget Act of 1974 requires the President's request to be submitted to Congress by the first Monday in February. There is no penalty for missing that deadline, however, and this year's budget was delayed by the recent partial government shutdown.

The FY 2020 Budget Proposal would reduce total non-defense discretionary spending from \$605 billion to \$550 billion. It would also increase defense discretionary spending from \$716 billion to \$750 billion (including approximately \$174 billion in the Overseas Contingency Operations account, which is shielded from current spending caps).

While impacts on specific agencies would vary widely, many programs of significance to the County would face deep cuts or elimination. Included in the latter category are programs ranging from housing assistance programs such as CDBG and the HOME Investment Partnership, to public safety programs such as SCAAP.

Congressional leaders continue to wrestle with the impending expiration of the current budget caps on October 1. The caps were temporarily increased for FY 2018 and FY 2019, but will revert back on October 1, which would result in across-the-board spending cuts of approximately 10 percent of discretionary spending.

We are working in coordination with other local government stakeholders to advocate for the County's funding priorities in the annual appropriations bills. House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees are continuing to hold hearings on the budget and our local delegation members are also weighing in with their spending priorities for the coming fiscal year.

PILT

We provided programmatic funding requests for the Payments In Lieu of Taxes program to our local delegation to urge their support and provide the budget justifications needed for the development of appropriations legislation. Supervisor Lavagnino and Representative Carbajal participated in a press conference during the March NACo Legislative Conference to support full, mandatory funding for PILT. We have coordinated our advocacy with these efforts, including requesting support for Dear Colleague letters being circulated in the House and Senate. We also contacted the Appropriations Committees directly, noting the importance of reliable PILT funding to help offset losses in property taxes due to non-taxable Federal lands within Santa Barbara County. The County received \$1.86 million from PILT last year.

HOUSING/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

We are working in coordination with community development stakeholders to support key programs at HUD in FY 2020. We have requested support for Dear Colleague letters that are being circulated to oppose the elimination of funding for the Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnerships programs in the President's FY 2020 Budget Request. We also contacted the Appropriations Committees and our delegation about the funding requests, noting that Santa Barbara County was allocated \$1,190,279 in CDBG funding, and \$1,038,021 under the HOME Program for FY 2018.

IMMIGRATION

Representative Roybal-Allard (D-CA) recently introduced H.R. 6, the *American Dream and Promise Act of 2019*, to grant Dreamers conditional permanent resident status for 10 years, cancel removal proceedings if they meet certain requirements, and provide a process for

attaining lawful permanent resident status. The bill also includes protections for immigrants with Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Enforced Departure decisions.

We have advocated the County's support for comprehensive immigration reform that includes an earned path to citizenship and continuation of protections provided under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Speaker Pelosi reserved the low bill number for H.R. 6 to indicate that it is a top priority of House Democrats. No schedule for committee action has been announced yet.

President Trump vetoed H.J.Res. 46 on March 15, the day after the Senate voted 59-41 to pass the measure to disapprove his border emergency declaration. Although solid majorities in both the House and Senate voted to pass the measure, the resolution of disapproval does not have the support needed to over-ride the veto.

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. On March 13, the House Judiciary Committee marked up H.R. 1585, the *Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019*, to extend VAWA programs through 2024. Most VAWA program authorizations expired in December and an extension or multi-year reauthorization is needed to provide stability to these programs.

INMATE HEALTH CARE COSTS

Congressman Hastings (D-FL) has re-introduced his legislation from the 115th Congress, the *Restoring the Partnership for County Health Care Costs Act*, as H.R. 1345. The legislation 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. H.R. 1345 was introduced in conjunction with NACo's efforts on this issue, and we are coordinating our advocacy on the issue with NACo staff. 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. The bill has been referred jointly to the House Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means, neither of which has of yet scheduled hearings on the proposal.

DISASTER APPROPRIATIONS

The Senate plans to vote later this week on its version of legislation to provide supplemental appropriations for disaster recovery. The House passed H.R. 268 on January 15 to appropriate \$14 billion of additional funds for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Economic Development Administration, HHS, HUD and numerous other agencies to provide relief and recovery assistance. Eligibility for funding varies by agency, but generally covers Hurricanes Michael or Florence, or other hurricanes, typhoons, volcanic activity, or wildfires occurring in calendar year 2018. The Senate version is still under development but is expected to grow due to recent flooding in the Midwest and tornadoes in Alabama and Georgia.

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