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September 2, 2021

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

I am writing on behalf of the County of Santa Barbara in support of legislation to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

The current authorization for TANF will expire at the end of fiscal year 2021. The County requests your support for reauthorization legislation to maintain continuity for this program.

A long-term authorization for TANF is needed to increase funding and improve the program. Santa Barbara County supports a more balanced TANF approach between federal oversight and state flexibility to enhance its ability to achieve more successful outcomes through the program. This includes criteria that measure its effectiveness by utilizing more outcome-based measures, and that restore and enhance the flexibility to tailor work and support services to local needs. In particular, the County supports the reversal of the damaging changes to the Work Participation Rates formula and definition of "work" implemented by DRA. In addition, the County urges an increase in TANF block grant funding, which has eroded by about 30 percent in real terms since 1996. The reauthorization process also provides an opportunity to increase support for TANF subsidized employment programs and child care.

Please support enactment of legislation this year to provide the highest possible funding for TANF to continue this critical safety-net program.

Sincerely yours,

Don Gilchrest  
Washington Representative

DWG: awg