

Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

March 5, 2014

FY 2015 FEDERAL FUNDING

Passage of the *Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013* and completion of the *FY 2014 Consolidated Appropriations Act* in January should help to make the FY 2015 appropriations process should flow more smoothly than in recent years. However, work on those measures resulted in the delay of the President's annual budget request to Congress, which is usually released the first week in February. The Administration is rolling out its FY 2015 Budget over the weeks of March 4 and March 11, and we have begun attending briefings with relevant Federal agencies and gathering summary information for review by County staff. The respective House and Senate Appropriations Committees have already begun hearings in anticipation of drafting the twelve FY 2015 Appropriations bills.

ENTITLEMENT REFORM

We provided County staff with House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan's (R-WI) report entitled, *The War on Poverty: 50 Years Later*. In his report, Chairman Ryan criticizes the Federal government's patchwork of "duplicative and complex" anti-poverty programs. The report also proposes two major reforms in Federal safety-net programs. It would convert Medicaid to a block grant program, with funding tied to inflation and population growth. Similarly, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) would also become a block grant program to States, with new work requirements for recipients.

Chairman Ryan intends to use his plan as the foundation for his Committee's FY 2015 budget resolution. The report was released in anticipation of the Administration's submittal of its fiscal 2015 budget request to Congress, which calls for increases in funding for several social services program. It should be noted that Senate Majority Leader Reid (D-NV) has already indicated that the Senate will

not do a budget resolution this year, arguing that the *Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013* provided the necessary framework for FY 2015 spending.

FUNDING FOR PROBATION SERVICES

We were alerted in January that the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) had ordered California to cease claiming for Title IV-E pre-placement candidacy activities by county probation departments because of deficiencies found in two counties during informational sight visits last fall. These pre-placement activities are used very successfully by the Probation Department to focus on maintaining probation youth with their families when in the best interests of the child, and avoiding much more costly court-ordered placements in foster care or institutions. Elimination of this Federal funding stream would result in the loss of about \$720,000 annually for the Probation Department, affecting six officers supervising approximately 180 high risk youth. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS), working with the Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC), proposed an alternative resolution containing an expedited implementation of a corrective action plan, and after Chief Probation Officer Taylor wrote our local Congressional delegation, we followed up to educate them regarding the program. We also coordinated with CPOC on its advocacy efforts, and asked Congresswoman Capps, Senators Boxer and Feinstein to weigh in with the Federal agency. ACF has now notified the State that they have accepted the corrective action plan, enabling counties to resume claiming the funding for pre-placement services.

OLDER AMERICANS ACT

As follow-up to Supervisor Carbajal's meetings during his Washington, DC lobbying trip, we contacted the House and Senate committees of jurisdiction to reiterate the County's support of efforts to reauthorize the Older

Americans Act (OAA), emphasizing the wide range of critical services it supports for the County's elderly populations. In the Senate, Aging Subcommittee Chairman Sanders' (I-VT) S. 1562, the *Older Americans Act Amendments*, has been approved by the committee and placed on the Legislative Calendar to await consideration by the full Senate. In the House, the Committee on Education and the Workforce has finally begun holding hearings on reauthorization in anticipation of drafting a bill later in the spring.

CAMP 4

We continue to monitor Congressional activity regarding the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Mission Indians' Fee-to-Trust Application for the Camp 4 Property, including Congressman LaMalfa's (R-CA) legislation to take the land into trust, H.R. 3313. We once again discussed the legislation with the House Resources Committee, and staff reiterated that Congressman LaMalfa has not contacted them regarding the bill, and no hearings or other action have been scheduled. Congresswoman Capps remains adamantly opposed to the bill, and her staff reiterated that is doing all she can to dissuade any action on it. If the committee does decide to proceed with a hearing, she will then work to ensure that the County has a voice at it.

EARTHQUAKE INSURANCE

Senator Feinstein has re-introduced her earthquake insurance proposal from the 112th Congress as S. 1813 the *Earthquake Insurance Affordability Act*, and we contacted the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs to reiterate the County's support for the legislation. The proposal seeks to make earthquake insurance more accessible, thus increasing the number of insured homeowners and reducing the financial burden on taxpayers in the aftermath of a catastrophic earthquake. The committee has not yet scheduled hearings on S. 1813, and companion legislation has not been introduced in the House.

v Tom Walters v