



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GOVERNOR'S BUDGET HARMS COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

Data Reveals Disproportionate Impact of Budget Cuts on Communities of Color

(SACRAMENTO) – Today on the south steps of the State Capitol, Assemblymembers and Senators who represent the five legislative caucuses of the State Legislature held a press conference spotlighting the disproportionate impact of budget cuts on communities of color.

The “Quint Caucus” – comprising the Black, Latino, Asian Pacific Islander (API), Women’s, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Caucuses – spoke as one voice, sounding the alarm bell over proposed cuts to programs that predominantly serve African American and Latino low-income communities.

“We stand together in solidarity,” said Assembly Member Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens), chair of the Latino Caucus, during opening remarks. “Collectively, we represent over 56% of the state’s population, and we are gravely concerned about cuts to programs that have proven so effective at driving self-sufficiency in our communities.”

The focus of the event was recently released data from the Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) detailing the impacts of the proposed cuts, emphasizing three areas: CalWORKS, child care, and Cal Grants.

“Fundamentally, the state budget is a value statement,” said Senator Curren D. Price, Jr. (D-Los Angeles), chair of the Black Caucus. “It is the state’s yearly opportunity to affirm what it values and, quite literally, put its money where its mouth is.”

As updated in the May Revise, the proposed budget will reduce funding for CalWORKS by approximately \$879.9 million. According to the LAO analysis, as of July 1 of this year, African Americans and Latinos are projected to account for 72% of all CalWORKS cases, representing over 424,000 families across California. If the budget is adopted, approximately 76% of these families are likely to experience reduced assistance or discontinuation from the program.

“Thousands of families rely on CalWORKS for cash assistance, job training and education. These Californians are struggling to make ends meet, and without this vital assistance may be unable to care for their families,” said Assembly Member Holly Mitchell (D-Los Angeles), chair of the Budget Sub-Committee on Human Services.

“At a time when unemployment among African Americans and Latinos is 18.8% and 13.7%, respectively, we cannot afford to reduce a program that has proven so effective at reducing poverty and empowering our communities,” cautioned Assembly Member V. Manuel Pérez (D-Coachella), budget and policy chair for the

Latino Caucus. Pérez also serves as chair of the Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development, and the Economy.

With respect to child care, the May Revise proposal reduces funding across several programs by a combined \$452.5 million. The LAO estimates that 73% of the proposed reductions will directly impact African American and Latino families.

“The cuts to child care create a triple threat,” explained Mitchell. “First, parents aren’t able to work if they can’t find care for their kids. Second, eliminating child care jobs puts someone out of work. Third, quality child care prepares children to learn and be successful so they can assume the jobs of tomorrow.”

Caucus leaders then turned their attention to changes proposed for the Cal Grant program. Due to their lower socio-economic status, Black and Latino youth tend to rely on the Cal Grant program to finance their educations. According to the LAO, African Americans and Latinos account for 60% of all Cal Grant recipients. The May Revise, however, anticipates roughly \$291.7 million in Cal Grant reductions to be achieved through changes to the program eligibility and lower award amounts.

“Historically, higher education has been a means to escape the cycle of systemic poverty that has kept many young Black and Latino youth from achieving their true potential,” said Price. “We are sending a negative message by narrowing the rules of program eligibility.”

“By cutting the Cal Grants program yet again we are closing the door to higher education for many California students,” said Assembly Member Warren T. Furutani (D-South LA County), chair of the API Caucus. “In this economy, we cannot continue to slash the programs that help the most vulnerable among us to improve their lives. We must look at solutions that focus on increasing revenues.”

“Another year of austerity measures is not what Californians want,” said Senator Noreen Evans (D-Santa Rosa), chair of the Women’s Caucus. “Despite massive cuts across the board – falling disproportionately on children and women – we still have a \$16 billion shortfall. We can no longer just cut services to dig the state out of deficits because our Republican colleagues won’t consider raising revenues. We all must share the responsibility to look at all budget solutions.”

Assembly Member Rich Gordon (D-Menlo Park), chair of the LGBT Caucus, echoed these concerns and urged the exploration of other solutions: “Existing services help people break the poverty cycle. New revenue is needed to ensure we continue to provide state services that protect our most vulnerable.”

Members closed the event by calling upon the Governor and legislative budget committees to learn from this data and take it under serious consideration as the budget process moves forward.

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