



### **Restore Cuts to Child Only CalWORKs Grants**

The Western Center on Law and Poverty, the County Welfare Director's Association of California, the California Partnership, the Children's Defense Fund and the California Immigrant Policy Center along with the undersigned organizations, are calling on the Legislature to restore cuts to child only CalWORKs grants set to go into effect August 1. We are asking the Legislature to act now to prevent the harm that will result if these severe cuts go into effect.

After the Governor's budget was released in January, we urged the Legislature to adopt an approach to CalWORKs that would protect grants for those families who rely on cash assistance. The Legislature reduced the amount across the board cut proposed by Governor Brown from 13% to 8%, reduced the earned income disregard, imposed a 48 month time limit on aid for adults and reduced county funding for welfare to work activities. While these cuts were extremely painful, they were consistent with preserving cash assistance for those with the greatest needs.

The Legislature, however, also approved cuts to grants for child only cases that have been on assistance longer than 60 months. These cuts begin at 5% and escalate to 15% if any child has been on aid more than 85 months. When combined with the 8% across the board cut these families will get a 13% to 23% grant cut beginning August 1. Children that get the full 23% cut will receive \$439 a month, just 28.6% of the federal poverty level.

Providing cash assistance to children is a crucial part of battling childhood poverty in California. That is why the Legislature and Governor Wilson chose to always provide aid to children even if parents were not able to meet welfare to work requirements. Research demonstrates that children who live in deep poverty, are more likely to suffer from a host of poor outcomes that carry forward to adulthood. Without such assistance, there was also concern that many children would end up in foster care or child welfare services.

The undersigned groups are deeply concerned that many of these children will suffer long lasting impacts from these cuts. We anticipate that the reductions, especially those for non-needy caretakers, will result in more children being placed into foster care and utilizing child welfare services at far higher cost to the public. We believe that reducing grants for these caretakers sends the wrong message and will force many of them to give the children up to foster care where benefits are not time limited.

In addition, counties are having to use time and resources to implement the cuts and send out notices of action. Some counties may not have accurate records for how long children have been on assistance, in part because there was never a time limit before.

Therefore we are asking the Legislature to reverse the action taken in March to reduce grants for child only cases. With the state having more revenue than anticipated, we believe it is right to protect the most vulnerable children from harm. If the Legislature acts now, that harm will never occur.

Sincerely,

Western Center on Law & Poverty

County Welfare Director's Association of California

California Partnership

Children's Defense Fund

California Immigrant Policy Center