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Assembly California Legislature



MIGUEL SANTIAGO
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, FIFTY-THIRD DISTRICT

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March 1, 2018

Assemblymember Phil Ting
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assemblymember Dr. Joaquin Arambula
Chair, Budget Subcommittee No. 1
State Capitol, Room 5155
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Agenda Request – CalWORKs Homeless Assistance Program (HAP)

Dear Assemblymembers Ting and Arambula,

We, Assemblymember Santiago and Assemblymember Maienschein, in a joint effort with the County Welfare Directors Association of California, the Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations, and Western Center on Law and Poverty, respectfully request an increase of the benefit pay for temporary shelter to \$85 per day for a CalWORKs family of up to four and include an annual cost-of-living increase. For additional family members, we request the \$15 per day remain the same as long as the total daily benefit does not exceed \$145. We also request to eliminate the requirement that the benefit be used within 16 consecutive days.

The CalWORKs Homeless Assistance Program (HAP) provides temporary assistance to families who are eligible for CalWORKs. Specifically, HAP provides payments for a hotel/motel for homeless families for up to 16 consecutive days. California took a step forward in 2016 when it approved a change in CalWORKs HAP to lift the once-in-a-lifetime restriction on temporary housing benefits, making this assistance available once every twelve months. Although this was an improvement, there is still work to be done to ensure our state is adequately helping homeless families.

The current statutory benefit rate is \$65 for a family of four, with an additional \$15 per day for each additional family member up to a maximum of \$125 daily. Increasing the benefit rate to \$85 with a COLA would amount to a \$5 increase per person. The daily rate was increased over ten years ago from \$30 (1987) to \$40 (1999) to \$65 (2006). Because the average hotel/motel rate has increased every year, today \$65 is not enough to meet the actual cost for staying at a safe, well-kept hotel/motel room. This is especially evident in metropolitan communities, such as those we represent in Los Angeles and San Diego. In fact, according to the Federal CPI Inflation Calculator, \$65 dollars in 2006 has the same buying power as \$78 in 2017.

We represent communities with high populations of homeless families and children and we are concerned that the current benefit rate is not sufficient. Thus, we are joining efforts across party lines to ensure California's CalWORKs families have dignified and affordable shelter.



We strongly urge the Assembly Budget Committee to include an increase in benefit rate in the budget. Should you have any questions regarding this budget request, please contact our offices at 916-319-2053 (Assemblymember Miguel Santiago) or 916-319-2077 (Assemblymember Brian Maienschein).

Sincerely,



MIGUEL SANTIAGO
Assemblymember, 53rd District



BRIAN MAIENSCHIN
Assemblymember, 77th District

Cc: The Honorable Anthony Rendon, Speaker, California State Assembly
Members, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1
Christian Griffith, Chief Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee
Nicole Vazquez, Deputy Chief Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee
Gail Gronert, Office of Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
Cyndi Hillery, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office
Mark Newton, Legislative Analyst's Office
Ginni Bella Navarre, Legislative Analyst's Office
Michael Wilkening, Health and Human Services Agency
Marko Mijic, Health and Human Services Agency
Will Lightbourne, California Department of Social Services
Robert Smith, California Department of Social Services
Kären Dickerson, California Department of Social Services
Kristen Shelton, HHS, Department of Finance
Jay Kapoor, HHS, Department of Finance
Farrah McDaid-Ting, California State Association of Counties