



LEGISLATION and 2017/2018 BUDGET ITEMS FOR SENIORS

Senior Rally Day “Seniors Count” advocates are seeking a new perspective on senior policy and budget issues from the California State Legislature. The fragmentation of aging and long-term care programs across the state bureaucracy in many ways reflects the fragmented jurisdiction of legislative committees. We are asking the Legislature to take a more comprehensive view by:

1. Expanding the jurisdiction of the Assembly Committee on Aging and Long Term Care;
2. Creating a Standing Senate Committee on Aging and Long Term Care; and
3. Conducting Assembly and Senate Joint Hearings among the respective Budget Committees and relevant Standing Policy Committees to focus on aging and long term care budget items only.

MEANWHILE, WE ASK YOU TO SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT PROMOTES INDEPENDENCE AND FIGHTS POVERTY, INCLUDING THESE BILLS!

SB62 (Jackson) Establishes the Affordable Senior Housing Program within GO-Biz as part of the Economic Revitalization Act. The program would guide and serve as a catalyst for the development of affordable senior housing in California. The GO-Biz program would identify and convene public and private stakeholders and assist program participants to find suitable locations and potential sources of public and private funding, and in obtaining state and local permits. GO-Biz would also assist with regulatory compliance and provide information on tax credits and other incentives.

SB177 (Nguyen) Appropriates \$3,300,000 from the General Fund to the State Department of Health Care Services for allocation to Caregiver Resource Centers (CRCs) for the purpose of providing respite care services. The measure also enables CRC’s to provide services, except for respite care services, using remote technology.

SB202 (Dodd) Increases the Medi-Cal monthly personal needs allowance from \$35 to \$80 while a person is a patient in a medical institution or nursing facility and requires the Department of Health Care Services to annually increase this amount based on a percentage increase in the California Consumer Price Index.

AB806 (Kalra) Creates a tax credit for certain expenses incurred by a family caregiver for the care and support of a qualifying family member not to exceed \$1000.

AB1200 (Cervantes) Codifies into state law an existing program thereby enabling access to federal funds by establishing the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) program in the California Department of Aging. ADRC’s provide information to consumers and their families on available long-term services and support programs, and assists older adults, caregivers, and persons with disabilities in accessing those programs. An ADRC Advisory Committee would advise on development and implementation of the program. The department and the State Department of Health Care Services would enter into a memorandum of understanding with the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to authorize local government agencies to claim federal Medicaid reimbursement for qualified administrative activities.

AJR8 (Kalra) Calls upon California’s Representatives in Congress to vote against cuts to, and proposals to privatize Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid and calls upon the President to veto any such legislation. Calls upon the President and the Congress to expand and improve these programs.

SENIOR RALLY DAY “SENIORS COUNT” ADVOCATES ASK YOU TO SUPPORT THESE BUDGET ITEMS:

Restore SSP/SSI cuts to lift individuals out of poverty. The California Association of Area Agencies on Aging SSI Coalition requests the restoration of SSP grant cuts and COLA to bring individuals to at or above the federal poverty level (FPL) is as follows: 1) January 2018, increase SSP grant to be equal to 96 percent of the FPL when combined with the SSI grant; 2) January 2019, increase SSP grant to equal 100 percent of the FPL when combined with the SSI grant; and 3) After 2019, the statutory COLA would be restored. Currently, the individual SSI/SSP grant is worth 89% percent of the FPL. *(See also AB796 (Kalra, Thurmond))*

Maintain Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs capacity to protect long-term care residents. The California Long-Term Care Ombudsman Association (CLTCOA) requests a \$1 million allocation from the State Health Facility Citation Penalties Account for ongoing support of local Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs. The Governor has proposed reducing the Ombudsman Program budget by \$1 million. Continuing to receive the \$1 million for a third year would not increase the budget of the 35 local programs, but it would keep them equal to the same amount awarded in their 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 budgets and protect the progress made. *(See also AB-550 (Reyes))*

Keep termination of the Coordinated Care Initiative (CCI) from creating County fiscal chaos. The Governor proposes terminating CCI, which coordinates medical and long-term care supports and services in seven counties, and the corresponding Maintenance of Effort (MOE) arrangement for IHSS in all 58 counties. With CCI terminated, the previous state/county cost sharing arrangement for IHSS would be reinstated making counties responsible for 35 percent of the non-federal portion of IHSS program costs on July 1, 2017. If counties are forced to bear the full brunt of this cost shift in 2017/2018 as well as the growing out-year costs, the financial hardship will impact many programs beyond IHSS as counties scramble to close resulting deficits. A compromise solution is needed.

Fund Senior Nutrition Programs to provide an additional one half-million meals to California seniors. Food insecurity is growing among older Californians. The California Association of Area Agencies on Aging and other advocates request \$12.5 million in General Fund dollars to augment existing senior nutrition programs. Area Agencies on Aging operate these programs, including Congregate Mealsites and Meals on Wheels.

Sustain senior advocacy and engagement by supporting the California Senior Legislature (CSL). Re-appropriating unexpended General Fund monies allocated to CSL in 2016/17 will support operations while the organization pursues an ongoing revenue source. The amount projected to roll over is \$175,000 *(included in Governor’s Budget)*. *(See also AB519, California Senior Citizen Advocacy Fund (Levine and Ridley-Thomas) which establishes a Tax Check-off to fund CSL and waives the annual minimum total contributions threshold.)*

Keep seniors from becoming homeless by funding APS-Home Safe. The California Welfare Directors Association, the California Elder Justice Commission, and the California Commission on Aging request one-time funding of \$10 million General Fund to establish APS-Home Safe, a homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing demonstration grant program for victims of elder abuse and neglect.

Keep our seniors safe by funding RCFE and ARF Complaint Investigation and Licensing. Address a growing backlog of RCFE and ARF applications by 1) increasing Technical Assistance Fund (TAF) spending authority to \$3.3 million to tackle issues within the Community Care Licensing Division including timely investigation of complaint allegations, and 2) continuing implementation of the RCFE Reform Act of 2014 *(included in Governor’s Budget)*.

Help keep seniors from homelessness by continuing The Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP). The 2016 “No Place Like Home” package of homelessness initiatives included \$45 million General Fund dollars for HDAP. HDAP provides one-time incentive funding for local government outreach to enroll eligible poor people in the SSI/SSP program. The Governor proposes to halt implementation of HDAP. Receiving the benefits for which they qualify can keep people from living on the street. HDAP must continue.