



Karol Swartzlander, Executive Director
Gavin Newsom, Governor

May 22, 2024

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The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Robert Rivas
Assembly Speaker
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senate President pro Tempore
Senator Mike McGuire
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Scott Wiener
Chair, Senate Budget Committee
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: California Commission on Aging Response to May Revision of Proposed 2024-25 State Budget

Dear Governor Newsom, Speaker Rivas, Pro Tem McGuire, Assemblymember Gabriel, and Senator Wiener:

The California Commission on Aging has reviewed the Governor's May Revision to the proposed 2024-25 budget and wishes to express its thoughts on a few of the key components affecting older adults. We have been impressed with the Governor's commitment to the Master Plan for Aging as a vision we know will serve older adults for years to come. We are cognizant of the dilemma the Administration faces with the current budget situation. Still, we are concerned with a few areas that are facing cuts even as the older adult population continues to grow.

We are concerned with the proposed \$50 million in cuts to Adult Protective Services (APS) in the Governor's May Revision. APS provides invaluable services to all older adults across the income spectrum who are experiencing or at-risk of abuse or neglect, including self-neglect, and bridges the gap between older adults in precarious situations and the setting that will provide the services they need. Equally concerning are the cuts proposed to Home Safe, a program that relies on county APS agencies for intake after which Home Safe guides the clients to housing and services designed to maintain housing stability.

The proposed cuts to Home Safe are especially disappointing when coupled with the cuts to APS. These cuts will not only diminish the ability of local agencies to respond to cases of older adult abuse and neglect but will also have a cascading effect on programs designed to reduce the number of older adults experiencing homelessness. Additionally, the \$50 million proposed cut to the Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP) will compound this problem by further reducing programs that provide pathways to housing for older adults and adults with disabilities. With adults over the age of 50 composing almost half of the homeless population, we believe that these cuts will remove vital tools that stem the flow of older adults into homelessness.

Further, we are concerned with the proposed elimination of the Older Adult Behavioral Health program which would have provided \$30 million for local community capacity building grants. While these funds have yet to be spent, they are an important part of preparing for and responding to a dramatic increase in behavioral health issues among older adults. Nonetheless, CCoA will continue to advocate for the utilization of new funding structures, such as the reorganization of the Mental Health Services Act under Proposition 1, to ensure older adults are a prioritized population for behavioral health services.

Additionally, we are concerned with the cutting of \$111 million in senior nutrition spending from the Older Californians Act Modernization. While we understand that there will be flexibility among other revenue sources to augment this loss, we are concerned about the ability of these other sources to fully restore the funding lost from these proposed cuts. Essentially, these cuts are asking Area Agencies on Aging to be more innovative in providing nutrition services to an increasing older adult population while at the same time reducing the resources at their disposal. Food insecurity remains a significant issue for the stability and health of older adults, especially those with low income who cannot afford healthy nutritious food while struggling to meet housing and medication costs. We ask that consideration be given to the long-term impact that fully funded nutrition services can have on the well-being of the fastest-growing population in the state.

As an independent state entity, we understand the complexities of managing a large budget deficit that attempts to balance services to the most vulnerable and the stark realities of fiscal prudence. However, we believe it is in the best interest of all Californians that programs are fully utilized to empower and enhance the individual health, safety, and longevity of older adults. We look forward to continuing to work with your administration and the legislature to ensure the important work done through the Master Plan for Aging is fully realized.



Karol Swartzlander, Executive Director
Gavin Newsom, Governor

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cheryl Brown".

Cheryl Brown, Chair
California Commission on Aging

Cc:

Richard Figueroa, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
Kim McCoy Wade, Senior Advisor on Aging, Disability, and Alzheimer's, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom

Angela Pontes, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly, California Health and Human Services Agency

Susan DeMarois, Director, California Department of Aging

Kim Johnson, Director, California Department of Social Services

Michelle Baass, Director, California Department of Health Care Services

Joe Stephenshaw, Director, California Department of Finance

Senator Caroline Menjivar, Chair Senate Budget Subcommittee #3 Health & Human Services

Assemblymember Dr. Jasmeet Bains, Chair, Assembly Aging & Long-Term Care

Assemblymember M.D. Akilah Weber, Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #1 Health

Assemblymember Dr. Corey Jackson, Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #2 Human Services

Scott Ogus, Deputy Staff Director, Senate Budget Committee

Nicole Vazquez, Deputy Chief Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee

Elizabeth Fuller, Chief Consultant, Assembly Aging and Long-Term Care Committee