

CCWRO Weekly New Welfare News

Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations, Inc. 1901 Alhambra Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95816
• Telephone (916) 736-0616 • Cell (916) 712-0071 Fax (916) 736-2645

June 30, 2008,
Issue #08-04

DSS Will Not Automatically Share Draft ACL/ACINS with Counties

For many years it has been the official policy of the State Department of Social Services (CDSS) to fax draft All County Letters (ACL) and All County Information Notices (ACIN) for their initial review and comment to the California Welfare Directors Association (also known as CWDA), a independent nonprofit organization representing county welfare departments, who lobby for laws and funding for benefit of the welfare bureaucracy. In all fairness, sometimes CWDA opposes legislation that would be detrimental to CalWORKs recipients.

Welfare advocates obtained a copy of the official DSS policy to this effect and started asking that the DSS WtW division also share such drafts with advocates. DSS responded that this will be way to cumbersome and refused to share all draft ACL/ACINs. CCWRO reviewed the potential number of ACLs and ACINs that DSS would have to share every month and determined that it would be about one ACL/ACIN a week. DSS has agreed and does share draft ACLs and ACINs that represent a substantial policy change. Advocates have determined that what constitutes "substantial change" is very subjective and decided to start asking for a copy of any and all ACL/ACINs shared with CWDA every week under the California Public Records Act (See California Government Code §§ 6250 et.seq.).

After doing two request we have been told that CDSS has informed CWDA that CDSS would not longer automatically share draft ACL/ACINs with CWDA, but CWDA is welcome to come over to DSS and look at the new draft ACL/ACINs. No similar offer has been made to advocates.

It appears that DSS is trying any scheme to get around the laws enacted by the People of the State of California and the Legislature. The Swarzenegger Administration, rather than encouraging and opening up the government to the People has decided to manipulated the system to make sure the People do not see the information that the welfare bureaucracy is cooking that may impact the People.

We contacted the Office of Governor Schwarzenegger, who has alleged that he favors sharing information with the People, but his office had no response as we went to press with this issue.

County Welfare Department Client Abuse Report

Sacramento County terminated Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) for a married couple because the wife was pregnant and in her third trimester after receiving RCA for three (3) months. Thus, the \$555 RCA benefits were stopped at the end of May, 2008 and effective June 1, 2008 the pregnant couple was only given \$387, which is \$340 for the mother and a \$47 pregnancy allowance for he unborn. **\$47 "pregnancy special need" for the unborn was enacted into law in 1985 and it has never been updated through Republican or Democratic administrations.** What the county should have done was to discontinue the wife's RCA benefits, but the husband should have continued to received his RCA benefits until the 8 months was up or the birth of the child.

An **Alameda County** welfare advocate asserts that "...my client just told me that she had called and left several messages with her worker to reschedule a missed appointment, Ms. Russell-Chema. The client was able to get a hold of her worker by chance-- the worker told her that she had received the message but that if she receives five messages from the same person she doesn't call back because she assumes she is going to be harassed! What is that??" This is county welfare workers harassing