

CCWRO 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

February 24, 2009
Issue 09-04

FEDERAL STIMULUS BILL NEWS

Last week President Obama signed the America Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009-P.L.111-05. The bill makes 5 billion dollars available to states to whose caseloads are going up for basic assistance. This appears to mean money for welfare workers not poor families. Nothing in the bill says this money shall be used for payments to families to stimulate the economy. There is also money for nonrecurring aid, such as helping families with security deposits, utility shut-offs and money to pay for subsidized employment. Currently, when states carry over federal TANF dollars they can only use it for payment to families. This bill would let States take that money from poor families and give it to the state and county welfare bureaucracies. The money is sometimes used by states to balance their budgets or as tax relief to the rich. It should be noted that currently less than 30% of the TANF and state match money goes to poor families and children. The rest goes to the States who have been fleecing TANF dollars for years. The fleecing of TANF dollars continues under this bill at a greater level.

P.L. 111-05 also increases food stamp benefits by 13.6%. This bill can be viewed at: [http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/cpquery/R?cp111:FLD010:@1\(hr016\)](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/cpquery/R?cp111:FLD010:@1(hr016)).

SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY WEB-BASED APPLICATION SYSTEM REJECTS MANY OF THE POOR

San Francisco County is launching a web based application process called benefits.sf.org. It is an on-

line application system for Food Stamps, Medi-Cal, School Meals, EITC, WIC and Working Families Credit. According to the county, the system was intentionally designed to exclude CalWORKs and General Assistance (GA).

The county representative stated that GA is a county program, thus, they do not want to help people get on GA. It appears that CalWORKs is in the same category.

California Enacts New Budget

On February 19, 2009, California passed a budget that still has a \$5-6 billion deficit.

The democrats agreed to cuts in programs new taxes on the poor and middle class.

Republicans got new tax breaks for the big corporation while welfare parents, who struggle on a fixed income equal to 1989 levels, continue to suffer. Yes, Governor Schwarzeneger and his administration can proudly claim that they again screwed poor children. It is his claim to fame. It should be noted that he was aided by Republican and Democratic members of the State Legislature. The Democrats rejected a long list of other punitive and barbaric initiatives put forth by the Governor and his Republican allies.

1. Elimination of the CAPI program designed to help the elderly, disabled and blind: **Rejected**
2. Denying non-medical IHSS services to many recipients: **Rejected**

3. Imposing a 60-month time limit on certain needy kids: **Rejected**

4. Implement a 6-month self-sufficiency bureaucratic wasteful review: **Rejected**

5. Ten percent reduction in the CalWORKs grants which are at the same level that they were 20 years ago – pushing the benefits to about 30 years ago: **Rejected**

6. Stealing \$216.9 million in federal funds for CalWORKs and giving it to DDS and California Student Aid commission: **Rejected**

7. Suspending Pay-for-Performance to counties. Counties want performance incentives for themselves, but OPPOSE incentives for the poor: **Accepted**

8. 4% reduction of CalWORKs grant will go into effect unless the state received “sufficient federal stimulus funds”. We have no idea what is “sufficient”: **Accepted**

9. Elimination of the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP): **Rejected**

WORKFARE SANCTION REPORT

This Christmas, about 80,000 children, were recipients of California workfare sanctions – which means the fixed income of these impoverished families will be the same amount they received in 1984. Most sanctions by California’s 58 counties were unlawful. Most of these families were not even given transportation to participate in the

CCWRO is an IOLTA funded support center serving IOLTA legal services programs in California. Types of Services Offered: **Litigation, Counseling, Fair Hearing, Representation, Consultation, Informational Services, Research Services, In-Depth Consultation and Welfare Training.** Programs Covered: CalWORKs, Welfare to Work (WtW), Food Stamps, Media Cal, General Assistance & Refu-gee/Immigrant Eligibility. Refugee/Immigrant Eligibility. All Rights Reserved. **Contributors: Kevin Aslanian, Grace Galligher, Steve Goldberg and Diane Aslanian**

WtW program because the county wants to save money by denying transportation assistance to needy families.

There were 40,163 families who were being sanctioned in December of 2008 according to Department of Social Services WtW 25 reports. The statewide average sanction rate is 20.31% counties exceeding the statewide average are Colusa County who has 54 persons enrolled in the WtW program and had 34 persons in sanction mode. This is a 61% sanction rate. The next one is Kern County with a 56% sanction rate. Counties exceeding the statewide average are:

Statewide	20.31%
Colusa	61.11%
Kern	55.62%
Tuolumne	44.91%
Tehama	42.69%
Kings	40.99%
Yuba	39.90%
Trinity	37.33%
Monterey	36.99%
San Luis Obispo	36.70%
El Dorado	31.90%
Napa	30.93%
Marin	29.04%
Alpine	28.57%
Merced	27.89%
Humboldt	27.81%
Madera	27.80%
San Francisco	27.53%
Mendocino	27.43%
Lake	26.89%
Santa Cruz	26.26%
Imperial	25.67%
San Bernardino	25.46%
Nevada	24.70%
San Joaquin	24.65%
Fresno	24.25%
Riverside	23.64%
Sutter	23.43%
Los Angeles	22.71%
Inyo	22.45%
Shasta	22.18%
Santa Clara	21.71%
Stanislaus	21.37%

NOTE: LARGE COUNTIES BOLDED

DSS and counties refuse to cure the sanctions in accordance with the law.

A typical case is that of Ms. S.B. who was told by her WtW case manager Veronica Gonzales and the supervisor Frank Valenzuela that if she did not comply with WtW, without good cause, she can cure the sanction only by agreeing to a 90-day compliance plan. MPP 42-721.43 provides that a sanction is cured once the sanctioned individual perform the activity that he or she failed to perform – not a 90-day mandatory compliance period.

COUNTY WELFARE DEPARTMENT CLIENT ABUSE REPORT

SACRAMENTO COUNTY FORCES PARENTS TO DO WTW WITHOUT CHILD CARE

- Mr. & Ms. R.S. have been forced to participate in the welfare-to-work program by Sacramento County. They have been warned that if they do not, they will be sanctioned. This means their fixed income will be reduced down to early 1980 levels. They have a newborn baby. They asked for Child Care and their worker refuses to pay or arrange child care.

LOS ANGELES UNLAWFULLY DENIES SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

- Ms. C.S. of Los Angeles County has an on-call job. Whenever they call her she goes to work as ORDERED by Los Angeles County welfare department. She was told clearly that if she ever refuses a job she would be sanctioned

and her fixed income would be reduced. But Oscar Perez, a Los Angeles County official, testified under oath at a hearing that in Los Angeles County recipients have to work 20 hours a week or more in order to be eligible for transportation.

That is why 49% of the WtW enrollees who were vulnerable to a WtW sanction are not getting transportation in Los Angeles County. That is 23,709 participants who did not get transportation last Christmas. Many poor families in Los Angeles County had to use their food money for their Christmas meal to pay for the transportation to avoid being sanctioned.

DSS ACL 03-15 states:

“Every individual participating in an approved WTW activity, including employment, is eligible to receive necessary transportation supportive services.”....

“Q. Are there a minimum number of participation hours required of a CalWORKs participant in order to receive transportation services?”

A. No. Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) Section 42-750.11 states that necessary supportive services, including transportation, shall be available to every participant in order to participate in the program activity to which he or she is assigned or to accept or retain employment. “