

# CCWRO Welfare News

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## Welfare recipients contribute \$1.3 billion to California's general fund- No COLA and a host of cuts in the 2009-2010 budget

In the 2009-2010 budget battle, welfare recipients lost their COLA and had their benefits cut by 4%. Fixed incomes of California's poor families are currently at the same level as in 1988. Thousands of poor families will be having a terrible Thanksgiving, a miserable Christmas and a not so happy New Year.

**CHART #1**

Fiscal Year	TANF Dollar Contribution to the CA State Gen. Fund
1998-1999	\$745,249,000.00
1999-2000	\$1,021,913,000.00
2000-2001	\$1,126,647,000.00
2001-2002	\$1,088,940,000.00
2002-2003	\$1,088,940,000.00
2003-2004	\$1,088,940,000.00
2004-2005	\$1,087,321,000.00
2005-2006	\$1,299,448,000.00
2006-2007	\$1,184,134,000.00
2007-2008	\$1,745,291,000.00
2008-2009	\$1,268,997,000.00
2009-2010	\$1,299,314,000.00

**Total TANF Contribution to the California General Fund to date -**  
**\$13,738,994,000.00**

While fixed incomes of welfare recipients have been going backwards, resulting in widespread hunger and misery, the California General Fund has gobbled up \$14 billion meant for California's poor families. See **Chart # 1**.

## Home Visitation Federal Bill Recipient Position

This year, Congress is considering S.1267 and H.R. 2667, Early Support for Families Act proposals. These bills allocate \$2 billion over 5 years for social workers to do home visits to homes of low-income pregnant women and low-income families with young children who volunteer for a home visitation.

The Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organization (CCWRO) is a statewide organization working for the best interest of poor families and children. We have been working for poor families for over four (4) decades.

We are concerned about monies spent on proposals such as S.1267 and H.R.2667 which provide funds for bureaucrats instead of providing poor families with adequate benefit levels.

Since 2007, 1,760 children have died from alleged abuse and neglect. We do not condone sexual and physical

abuse, but we do find that "neglect" is a direct result of poverty which has affected the millions of low-income American family since the passage of the TANF legislation in 1996. Many of the provisions of TANF allows the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA) members who support S.1267 and H.R. 2667, to commit child neglect. These policies often resulting in "child neglect" are:

- a. Full family sanctions imposed by welfare administrators represented by NAPCWA.
- b. Spending less than 30% of the TANF funds for family assistance and skimming the remaining 70% for bureaucratic spending and balancing state budgets. (Since the inception of TANF, California has used over \$13 billion of TANF funds as a contribution the State General Fund).
- c. Limiting TANF's meager benefits to 2-5 years, then terminating all TANF benefits to families in many cases.
- d. Imposing full family sanctions upon families who failed to participate in NAPCWA member workfare programs due to lack of childcare and

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transportation. "Full family sanction" means terminated all cash aid to the family for allegedly not participating in the state workfare program.

NAPCWA states that in 2007 there were 3.2 million cases of alleged neglect of children. Of course, when food stamps run out and there is no money for food because the family has been subjected to full family sanction, and with welfare payments far below 40% of the poverty level, what can one expect? What does NAPCWA suggest when a family is homeless in January or the heating bill cannot be paid because the family were subject to full-family sanction or have timed out?

Now NAPCWA and their supporters are seeking \$2 billion for five years to launch a home visitation program that we believe would result in stealing babies and small kids from parents who are victimized by the TANF anti-family policy options of NAPCWA member States. Very little of that \$2 billion, if any, would be devoted to payments to families.

✓ *What good is a welfare bureaucrat going to do* for a family who has run out of food and cannot feed his or her children?

✓ *What good is a welfare bureaucrat going to do* for a family who has timed out from TANF and lives in 10% or more unemployment area?

✓ *What good is a welfare bureaucrat going to do* for a family who has been subject to full family sanction because they could not reach their welfare bureaucrat to report that they couldn't make their appointment because their children were sick.

✓ *What good is a welfare bu-*

*reaucrat going to do* for a family whose heat has been terminated for lack of funds? NAPCWA lobbyist and child welfare bureaucrats may allege that they do not remove children for being poor, but the victims of the child welfare system know better. This is especially true in states like California, New York, Wisconsin as well as many other states.

### The MYTHS about Child Protective Services.

**MYTH #1.** States have to provide reasonable efforts to keep the family together before children are removed.

**TRUTH** - The states do not provide any verifiable "reasonable efforts" to keep the family together. Social workers never state under penalty of perjury that they have done so. Moreover, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Sutter v. Artist M.*, 503, 347 (1992) held that states cannot be required to obey this law in Federal Court because Congress has not stated that parents can enforce this law in the federal courts. Well-financed lobbyists like NAPCWA are no competition for poor families with no lobbyists, so families cannot enforce their right to "reasonable efforts" before their children are removed in federal courts.

**MYTH #2.** Parents have legal representation.

**TRUTH** – The legal representation that parents generally receive borders on malpractice. The lawyers encourage parents to submit to the false allegations of the social workers and agree to a reunification plans that are never family friendly.

**MYTH #3.** Parents are given 12 to 24 months to reunify.

**TRUTH** – The reunification plan

forced upon parents are not achievable given the fact that the parents are in deep poverty. There is no federal law mandating that States pay for parents' transportation to the service providers outlined in the alleged reunification plan. Parents often have no transportation to visit their children and social workers often do not allow visits, thus, breaking up families. Social workers have been known to write reports that the parent did not visit the children and intentionally delete the economic reasons for the non visitation.

70% percent of persons in U.S. prisons are products of the foster care system. Kids are ripped from their families, and when they become 18-19 years old, they are turned loose without any family support or safety net.

### CONCLUSION

This proposed visitation program is allegedly voluntary. However what this \$2 billion will do is give social workers the opportunity to enter the homes of poor families under the threat of removing the children if the parent does not volunteer for the visit. Once the social workers have entered the house, they can easily build a case for neglect given the poverty of the families. Children will be removed, families will be broken up in many cases, and the babies and smallchildren will be adopted out.

There is no provision in this bill that 70% of the funds shall be used as payments to families addressing problems such as no food, no home, no heat, no water, no electricity, no clothing, which are the primary causes of neglect.

Only 30% or less of the \$2 billion should be used to pay for welfare bureaucrats. In fact, we would submit, that this program should be run by volunteers, whose sole interest is to help poor families - not spot babies and young children for adoption.