CCWRO Welfare News

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LOS ANGELES COUNTY ERECTS MAJOR BARRIERS FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES IN NEED OF HOMELESS ASSISTANCE

Los Angeles County has been talking to the State about their concern for CalWORKs homelessness. They heavily lobbied the Legislature to get $4 million in 2016-2017 for the housing support program for CalWORKs for Los Angeles County.

Meanwhile, Los Angeles County DPSS also has a policy to discourage welfare workers from issuing homeless assistance benefits to homeless CalWORKs families with children. Los Angeles County's procedure for approving homeless assistance is multi-leveled. If a homeless family walks into the welfare department at 1 pm and is seen by the worker at 4 pm- homeless assistance generally will not be approved that day. Following the worker's interview with the family, the worker must have the homeless assistance application reviewed and approved by both the supervisor and deputy director. The poor worker who decides to help a homeless family, now has track down the supervisor and the deputy who are often in meetings.

WHAT SHOULD DPSS DO TO HELP HOMELESS FAMILIES? If a county really wants to make sure people get homeless assistance, the policy should be that only denials of homeless assistance must be approved by the supervisor and the deputy.

Continuing Misdeeds in LA County - LRS Victim

KD #B0F9549 applied for emergency aid (CalWORKs Immediate Need & CalFresh Expedited Service) for her and her child on 9/1/16 and was told she had to wait 5 days for emergency aid for her and her child. After her advocate explained to the worker that she MUST get aid within one working day if approved, she was granted a CalWORKs Immediate Need payment. However, her Expedited Service Cal-Fresh payment was not to be posted on her EBT card until 9/9/16, based on the last digit of her case number, a full 8 days after the aid was approved. She was given a $12 CalFresh payment to last her and her child one week. That's $1.50 per day for her and her child. When advocates contacted the worker's supervisor, she explained that because of the switch over of computer systems, though they have tried, they couldn't override the decision to apply the Cal-Fresh aid 8 days after the emergency aid was granted. KD was forced to spend her emergency cash aid on food though she had no money for food and was in dire need of the cash aid to pay rent.

20 Years of TANF; 20 Years of Holy Hell for the Poor Children & Families; and 20 Years of State-Fleecing of Federal TANF Funds

August 22, 1996 was the day that the AFDC program died as a result of Bill Clinton's signature. Although he vetoed similar bills previously, he signed this one to get reelected on the backs of poor families.

While the bill imposed time limits on poor families, Bill Clinton receives his welfare benefit every month until he dies regardless of his millionaire status. The same is true for every Democrat or Republican who voted for this ill-conceived legislation. To date, many of them have left Congress – some voted out – yet continue to receive their monthly welfare benefits for being members of Congress for more than six years.

> *Senator Wellstone on TANF–*
>
> *"... the evidence is irrefutable and irreducible: This legislation, once enacted into law, will create more poverty and hunger among children in America. That is not reform."*

Before 1996, 70% of the Aid Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) funds were used for payment to families. Today, only 30% of the TANF and matching funds are used for payments to families in dire need. 70% goes to support administrative costs and other programs.

In California, the State Legislature named the new program CalWORKs – implying that this is a "work program". Historical data from the CalWORKs program reveal that the program is not about "work"- it is all about reducing the number of CalWORKs recipients benefits by any means, including sanctions and reaching the maximum time limits. Simple logic dictates that before starting a statewide work program the government evaluates the types of jobs that exist and the skill sets that are needed for those jobs.

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20 Years, cont'd from pg. 1

TABLE # 1 - Unduplicated Participants Leaving CalWORKs after Getting a Joib

Year	TANF Client Sanctions	TANF Clients Getting Jobs
2000	18%	4%
2001	16%	4%
2002	19%	3%
2003	30%	4%
2004	38%	4%
2005	37%	3%
2006	32%	3%
2007	27%	3%
2008	25%	2%
2009	25%	2%
2010	25%	2%
2011	24%	2%
2012	28%	3%
2013	31%	3%
2014	38%	2%
2015	33%	3%
2016	36%	4%

Had California done this, the results would have been far more qualified, trained workers in the state. Instead, CalWorks recipients were given little training and support. This did not deter the architects of the CalWORKs program to go forward with this ill-conceived program. The architects compounded the problem by assigning the welfare departments to act as the "jobs" office, instead of the Employment Development Department, creating a ***"segregated"*** work program for CalWORKs families in California. Table #1 demonstrates the result of this "***segregated"*** program operated by the welfare departments acting as job offices.'

There are a host of employment prorgams designed for unemployed Americans that very few welfare recipients are allowed to participate in.

CalWORKs Barrier to Employment - Transportation

Several years ago, about 20 employment specialists met to identify the major barriers to employment for CalWORKs recipients. They all agreed that lack of transportation was, and still is, a major barrier to employment since fewer than 25% of CalWORKs recipients have a car. Public transportation is not work-friendly in California unless you live in San Francisco. Their solution-- Job Club and Job Search. Since Welfare-to-Work (WtW) is not a work program but a sanction program as evidenced by Table #1, the counties often don't pay for transportation and other supportive services. One welfare director said paying for transportation would mean money coming out of the county single allocation used to pay for the welfare bureaucracy.

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The Rampant Fleecing of the CalWORKs Program

Each year California fleeces the CalWORKs program by transfering millions of CalWORKs dollars from the mouths impoverished children to the State's General Fund. Meanwhile, CalWORKs families live on the same amount of money that they received in 1988 – some 26 years ago, which 31% of the federal poverty level. Historical data of the transfer is contained in **Table #2** on page three (3).

The California 2016-2017 State Budget Facts

The 2016-2017 CalWORKs budget of $7.1 billion is composed of $3.7 billion from the federal government, $3 billion state matching funds and another .4 billion carry-over from last year. However, only $5.3 billion was allocated to cash grants.

CalWORKs Program Funding 2016-2017

(in millions)

Cash Assistance to CalWORKs Eligible Families	$3,108
Employment Services	$1,347
County Welfare Administration	$413

The Administration labels the remainder as CalWORKs contribution to the General Fund. The money fleeced from the CalWORKs program is redistributed to the State Budget as a way for the Governor and the State Legislature to build a state budget that is "more voter-friendly".

Major Fleecers of the CalWORKs Funds in 2016-2017

(in millions)

Program Fleecing the CalWORKs Families	DollarsFleeced
CalGrant	$926
Regional Centers	$77
CDE Child Care Programs not for CalWORKs Families	$472
Transfer to Title XX	$365
Other	About $100

TABLE #2	
State Fiscal Year	Recipient Involuntary Contribution to the General Fund
FY 98-99	$708,502,000
FY 99-00	$745,249,000
FY 00-01	$1,021,913,000
FY 01-02	$1,126,647,000
FY 02-03	$1,088,940,000
FY 03-04	$1,163,238,000
FY 04-05	$1,087,321,000
FY 05-06	$1,299,448,000
FY 06-07	$1,184,134,000
FY 07-08	$1,745,291,000
FY 08-09	$1,268,997,000
FY 09-10	$1,262,291,000
FY 10-11	$1,262,046,000
FY 11-12	$1,234,159,000
FY 12-13	$1,896,060,000
FY 13-14	$1,586,755,000
FY 14-15	$ 1,528,424,000
FY 15-16	$ 1,489,480,000
FY 16-17	$ 2 billion

Senator Moynihan on TANF. *"As I have stated on this floor many times, this legislation does not reform aid to families with dependent children; it simply abolishes it. It terminates the basic Federal commitment of support for dependent children in hopes of altering the behavior of their mothers. We are putting those children at risk with absolutely no evidence that this radical idea has even the slightest chance of success. In our haste to enact this bill—any bill—before the November elections, we have chosen to ignore what little we do know about the subject of poverty. Just 2 days ago, on July 30, 11 of the Nation's leading researchers in this field issued a statement urging us not to do this. Real welfare reform would not impose deep food stamp cuts on poor families with children, the working poor, the elderly, the disabled, and the unemployed. It would not eliminate the safety net for most poor legal immigrants, including the very old and the infirm. It would not place at risk poor children whose parents are willing to work but are unable to find unsubsidized employment. 8-1-1996.*

Washington-based Center on Budget Policy & Priorities (CBPP) supports spending more money on segregated employment programs for welfare recipients.

Welfare recipients under TANF are forced into employment programs operated by the welfare department and not a state jobs department, like the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This is clear "segregation" for welfare recipients.

CBPP, represented by Donna Pavetti, testified in Congress that she wants 70% of TANF funding **not** to be used for payments to families of America who live in deep poverty. She wants the state to be able to use any amount of that 70% for the provision of "segregated employment programs" designed primarily to punish poor famlies for being poor by imposing full family sanctions on families with children. These families are being sanctioned because the state refuses to insure that families have child care and transportation services before being forced to participate in this segregated employment program.