



CCWRO Welfare News-2019-06

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Governor Newsom Appoints Kim Johnson

On June 27, 2019, Governor Newsom announced that he nominated Kimberley Johnson from Sacramento as Director of the California Department of Social Services subject to Senate Confirmation. Johnson served as deputy director of the Family Engagement and Empowerment Division at the California Department of Social Services from 2018 to 2019, branch chief of CalWORKs and Child Care from 2017 to 2018 and branch chief of Child Care and Refugee Programs from 2015 to 2017. She was public policy director at the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network from 2012 to 2015, manager of the early childhood mentor program at City College of San Francisco from 2009 to 2012, where she was director of programs and training for the parent services project from 2007 to 2010. Johnson was program director at the Children's Network of Solano County from 1999 to 2007. Director Johnson is a great choice to lead CDSS. CCWRO looks forward to working with Ms. Johnson on improving the lives of California's impoverished, making this a better place to live for families and individuals.

CalSAWS Prevents Advocate From Making a Public Statement

On June 28, 2019, the County CalSAWS computer system was legally born. This is an endeavor funded primarily with federal and state dollars that would build a new computer system "by the counties for the counties," as proclaimed by Antonina Jimenez, Director of Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services and the outgoing President of CalACES that became CalSAWS.

..a new computer system "by the counties for the counties," proclaimed by counties at CalSAWS

After Ms. Jimenez called the meeting to order, the next item on the agenda of the meeting was entitled "**2. Public opportunity to speak on items not on the Agenda. NOTE: The public may also speak on any item ON the Agenda by waiting until that item is read then requesting recognition from the Chair to speak**"

When Ms. Jimenez asked for public comments, Kevin Aslanian of the Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organization began to make a public statement, however, half-way through the statement, at the urging of Executive Director John Boule, CalACES President Antonina Jimenez cut him off and said, "your time has expired." The agenda did not specify a time limit for the public statement and so, the interests of public benefit beneficiaries were not heard.

Below is the full text of Kevin Aslanian's statement at the June 28, 2019 CalSAWS meeting.

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A County Computer System for the Counties - Not the People

(Cont'd from page 1)

CCWRO Public Statement for CalSAWS June 28, 2019 Meeting by Kevin Aslanian, CCWRO

“The California Computer System has been a blessing and a travesty for public benefit beneficiaries of California. The CalWIN migration took two or more years before all cases were transferred to the CalWIN system in early 2000. LEADER and LRS migration were also infested with problems that caused thousands of families to go without health care, food and housing in Los Angeles.

It seems like when a welfare computer system changes, all hell breaks loose, while, when the banks change their system, nobody knows about it. Why? “Money” is different than “people”. This is why we have been trying to be involved in the CalSAWS conversation. And I would not be doing my job right if I didn't highlight areas where we could all improve.

At the Los Angeles meeting last year, in his presentation, Mr. Boule confirmed that the CalSAWS system has four (4) partners: counties, the State, Legislature, and advocates/stakeholders. Since last year it has been evident that there is only one real partner in this endeavor – counties.

We admit that CalSAWS has been meeting with us monthly, but those meetings have been challenging and have not completely addressed advocate/stakeholder issues from the beneficiary/consumer perspective.

What is our vision for CalSAWS? While spending millions of dollars on CalSAWS we should at least have a system designed, like most other 21st century systems, and not the 19th or 20th century. We want CalSAWS to function at its max with all available 21st century technology to better serve the beneficiaries of public benefits that we represent.

CalSAWS is refusing to make many of the changes that we are proposing to have a computer system built in the 21st century that would fully utilize the 21st century available technology.

CalSAWS is happy to make enhancements that meet the county's 21st century needs, but not the 21st century needs of California's public assistance beneficiaries.

We have made over 40 specific recommendations that have been mostly ignored; such as:

- allowing beneficiaries to request WtW supportive services transportation, child care and ancillary services on-line;
- allowing beneficiaries to request advance payments;
- allowing beneficiaries to submit child care timesheets on-line;
- allowing beneficiaries to request and cure WtW sanctions on-line that reduce benefits for a family of two (2) from \$683 down to \$418 a month.
- allowing beneficiaries to request inter-county-transfer on-line by simply reporting a new address and then the 21st century computer will transfer the case to the appropriate county;
- allowing sanctioned CalWORKs parents to cure their sanctions on-line. Today they call their eligibility worker (EW) to stop the sanction. The EW refers them to the WtW worker. The WtW office says they do not have an open WtW case and tells them to call the EW. This is a regular ping-pong that has resulted in over 25,000 families being sanctioned for more than a year. See Table # 1 on page 3. There is a better way in the 21st century.

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TABLE #1

March 2019 - Source WtW 25 and CW 237					
	Partici- pants	Sanc- tions	% of Sanctions	Sanc- tions Over 1 Year	% of Sanctions Over One Year
One- Parent	50,440	37,394	43%	19,808	53%
Two- Parent	17,709	15,631	47%	6,117	39%
TOTAL	68,149	53,025	44%	25,925	49%

- allowing beneficiaries to do an immediate inter- view on-line after submitting the application with the aid of the 21st century artificial intelligence or “bots”.
- allowing beneficiaries to complete their OCAT – the WtW orientation on-line rather than driving 50-100 miles to the welfare office and paying \$3-4 a gallon for gas;
- allowing beneficiaries to request homeless assis- tance on-line rather than traveling long distances, sometimes waiting for hours with 2-3 hungry kids, in order to get off the streets of California;
- allowing beneficiaries to request domestic vio- lence (DV) exemptions and services on-line;

In summary, we want to make sure that this computer being built can provide maximum services to public benefit beneficiaries rather than saying “we can’t do that because we have been asked to bring the three 20th century systems together” rather than bring them into the 21st century.

CalSAWS is being built for the convenience of the counties in lieu of the most efficient and con- venient process for both counties and beneficia- ries whose lives will be affected by the statewide welfare computer system.

a new computer sys- tem “by the counties for the counties,” proudly proclaimed by counties at Cal- SAWS meeting

SSI Food Stamp Cash-Out Mess Update

Ms. 2041702 of Monterey County received an NOA reduc- ing her CalFresh benefits from \$448 to \$217. The NOA states “Here’s why: CK has either been added to your program or has become a member. This person has Income or Property, it counts when deciding your eligibility. Your income, or the income of your spouse, parent or sponsor has changed.”

This notice of action does not identify the exact reason for Ms. 2041702’s benefits reduction and leaves the reason open to interpretation.

Option # 1. CK was added to your program. Which pro- gram? Medi-Cal? SSI?

Option # 2. CK has become a member.

Option # 3. Income of the beneficiary caused the reduc- tion of CalFresh.

Option # 4. The income of the spouse caused the reduc- tion of CalFresh.

Option # 5. The income of the parent caused the reduc- tion of CalFresh.

Option # 6. The income of the sponsor caused the reduc- tion of CalFresh.

The NOA does not tell the beneficiary which of these six (6) reasons apply to his or her case. Maybe CDSS and counties think that CalFresh beneficiaries are telepathic and can read the mind of the county worker who took the nega- tive action.

The county computer systems were given millions of dol- lars to make sure that the SSI cash-out would not turn into a disaster. That did not help. In 2018-2019 counties got \$11 million, for 2019-2020 they will be showered with another \$1.8 million. Counties were also showered with \$129.1 million for staffing to make sure this program operates cor- rectly. See TABLE #2 below.

In many cases around the state similar to this instance, CalFresh households with SSI beneficiaries are getting NOAs that do not specify that the households will get a “supplemental nutrition benefit” (SNB) of \$70. This SSI child will still lose \$147 a month, even when they get the \$70 SNB money. And the promise was “nobody will be hurt”.

TABLE # 2

CalFresh SSI Eligibility Expansion Expenditures	FY 2018- 2019	FY 2019- 2020	TOTAL
<i>In Millions</i>			
CalFresh SSI Expansion County Administration	\$ 44.7	\$ 84.4	\$ 129.1
CalFresh SSI Expansion County Automation	\$ 11	\$ 1.8	\$ 12.8