

Revised Workfare Plan Is His Own, Governor Claims

By RICHARD C. PADDOCK, *Times Staff Writer*

SACRAMENTO—Gov. George Deukmejian took credit Wednesday for a bipartisan workfare proposal, contending that it is his own plan with a few extras added by Democratic legislators.

"I think the only difference is that there is perhaps a greater array of services that will be provided with more options," Deukmejian told reporters after addressing a meeting of the California Welfare Fraud Investigators Assn. in West Sacramento.

Assemblyman Art Agnos (D-San Francisco), a leader in forging the compromise, promptly responded that the new plan is far broader than the one originally proposed by Deukmejian. Agnos suggested the governor's "political pronouncements" could jeopardize chances for legislative approval of the compromise.

Upcoming Campaign Noted

"I think the governor is probably reflecting the upcoming campaign season," Agnos said. "Until the fish is hooked and put into the basket, we shouldn't exaggerate its size or the role we played in landing it."

Agnos, Health and Welfare Secretary David Swoap and legislators from both parties announced agreement last week on a plan called GAIN that would require able-bodied welfare recipients to work, receive vocational training or go to school in exchange for their grants.

The delicately crafted compromise provides elements sought by both conservatives and liberals. Welfare recipients, primarily women with children over the age of 6, would be required to participate in the program but would be able to choose from a variety of work and training options.

Completing College

Some would be allowed to complete their college education while on welfare. As many as one third of the eligible recipients could be required to work for their checks in an element of the program commonly known as workfare.

Advocates of the program say it would be the biggest overhaul of the welfare system in 15 years.

Deukmejian, who has been pushing legislation to enact his own workfare proposal called STEP-UP, a simpler program that would include job search, vocational training and workfare. Legislators, anticipating a bipartisan com-

promise plan, have delayed action on the Deukmejian proposal.

In his address to welfare fraud investigators, the Republican governor briefly discussed his STEP-UP plan.

"I'm encouraged that we have a bipartisan support for this program," Deukmejian said.

Afterwards, he told reporters in a hotel parking lot that he was referring to the GAIN program unveiled last week.

"Fundamentally, it's the STEP-UP plan," he said. "They (legislators) have suggested some changes, which we have accepted, but essentially it is the STEP-UP program which we had proposed."

The governor's description surprised Agnos who said, "The fact of the matter is that the bipartisan welfare reform proposal is a brand new product."

The compromise agreed to by legislators and Swoap—who repre-

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sented Deukmejian in the negotiations—drew on a variety of earlier proposals including STEP-UP, Agnos said. But, he said, it also contains a number of new features such as:

- Giving welfare recipients some choice in selecting work and training programs through a contract system.

- Providing outside binding arbitration to settle disputes between recipients and county welfare departments.

- Tailoring job search requirements to recipients' job histories.

- Allowing recipients to complete college if they have finished the first half of their education.

- Reducing punishment for violators of program rules.

The measure is expected to easily win approval in the Assembly, but its fate in the Senate is less clear.

Agnos said the governor's statements could make it tougher to win support among Democrats, especially those reluctant to give Deukmejian an issue to boost his bid for reelection in 1986.