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Governor Calls for Major Cuts to Immigrant Programs – Medi-Cal for Lawful Immigrants, CAPI and CFAP Programs Tagged for Elimination

In light of a growing budget deficit, Governor Schwarzenegger has called lawmakers for a special legislative session to consider mid-term cuts to the California budget. In addition to a range of Health and Human Service cuts proposed by the Governor, he has included the following proposals specifically targeting immigrant communities:

- The **elimination** of the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants, **CAPI** which provides a lifeline of support to thousands of lawfully present elderly and disabled immigrants in California who are not eligible for federal SSI.
- The **elimination** of the California Food Assistance Program, **CFAP**, which provides critical food assistance to lawfully present immigrants in California who do not qualify for federal food stamps.
- The **elimination** of full scope Medi-Cal for lawfully present immigrants in California who do not qualify for federal Medicaid.
- The imposition of a 60-month time limit on assistance through the **CalWORKs** program to eligible children where the parent does not qualify for CalWORKs.
- Other general cuts that would affect immigrants, such as grant reductions under CalWORKs and sanctions to families not meeting work-related program requirements.

Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI)

The Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI), established in 1998 under the administration of Republican Governor Pete Wilson, provides cash assistance to immigrant seniors and persons with disabilities who were rendered ineligible for federal SSI. CAPI provides basic assistance to low-income immigrant seniors and persons with disabilities, who rely on the grant to buy clothing, medicine and primarily to pay for housing. CAPI helps prevent these individuals from becoming destitute or losing a place to live. CAPI serves approximately 10,000 lawfully residing immigrant seniors and immigrants with disabilities in California.

California Food Assistance Program (CFAP)

CFAP provides nutrition assistance to low-income immigrant adults who have resided lawfully in the U.S. for less than five years. It is intended to provide essential assistance to immigrants who were rendered ineligible for federal food stamps by the 1996 federal welfare law, and operates identically to the federal food stamp program. The program serves 23,400 people and 23 percent of the caseload is comprised of immigrants with children.

Medi-Cal and CalWORKs

Lawfully residing immigrants, regardless of when they entered the U.S. are eligible for Medi-Cal and the CalWORKs program. These two programs provide immigrants with ongoing preventive medical care and assistance to working families. It is outright discrimination to eliminate these benefits for immigrants as a population category. Immigrants, like other Californians, pay taxes and need to rely on these programs in times of need.

A Statewide Partnership of:

APALC Asian Pacific American Legal Center • **NILC** National Immigration Law Center • **CHIRLA** Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles • **SIREN** Services Immigrant Rights & Education Network •