

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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May 27, 2026

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel,
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Room 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable John Laird
Chair, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8720
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Corey Jackson
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2
1021 O Street, Room 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Caroline Menjivar
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3
1021 O Street, Suite 6630
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: May Revision Reductions to Critical Services Supporting Older Adults and Adult Victims of Abuse and Neglect – OPPOSE

Honorable Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to urge the Legislature to reject the proposed permanent \$70 million reduction to the Adult Protective Services (APS) program in FY 2026-27 and ongoing, as proposed in the May Revision. The County also strongly opposes the FY 2026-27 Governor's Budget reductions to the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program. These proposals include shifting the full nonfederal cost of growth in IHSS hours to counties beginning in FY 2027-28, eliminating the Backup Provider System (BUPS), changes related to CFCO penalties, and automating termination of IHSS to align with the discontinuance of Medi-Cal. Maintaining funding for these programs is essential to ensure older adults and people with disabilities who are at risk of abuse and neglect remain safe, and that IHSS recipients continue to have reliable access to in-home care that prevents far costlier institutionalization. Both APS and IHSS programs are critical components of California's long-term services and supports system.

Reversion of APS Expansion: Urge Legislature to Reject

The reversion of the APS expansion included in the May Revision would raise eligibility from age 60 to 65 and significantly reduce our county's capacity to protect vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The proposal would trigger reductions in APS staffing and spikes to workloads, putting abused and neglected older and dependent adults at significant risk of further harm. The proposal would severely curtail or eliminate access to critical housing supports available through the Home Safe Program that prevents homelessness among older adults. Ultimately, this proposal will place older and dependent adults at risk of adverse outcomes, including homelessness, institutionalization, and premature death.

Eliminating the APS expansion program would roll back progress on elder justice and equity practices and undermines efforts to prepare for the significant increase in our state's aging population, in alignment

with California's Master Plan on Aging. It would also hinder the county's ability to meet new federal APS regulations that all APS agencies must comply with by May 2028.

The impact of this cut in our county would be significant. The 2021 APS expansion has been critical in our county to meet growing demand. Kern County receives approximately two million dollars annually from this funding source which has contributed to APS being able to keep up with nearly 7,000 reports of abuse and neglect. These funds came at critical juncture when our staffing was not keeping up with the increase in referrals. Cutting this funding will cause the Kern to reduce staffing in half and be able to respond timely to our most vulnerable populations. Meanwhile, reports to our APS hotline continue to increase year over year, increasing, by 29% since the aps expansion funding was approved by the legislature in 2021.

Our county APS Program is a gateway to the Home Safe Program, a proven housing and homelessness assistance and prevention program essential for stabilizing housing and preventing further harm. Rolling back APS eligibility would cut off services for at-risk adults ages 60–64, reducing the county's ability to prevent homelessness and coordinate care at a time when older adults are the fastest growing segment of the unhoused population.

California's aging population continues to grow, and our county is already struggling to keep pace with demand. These cuts would reverse critical progress and leave our APS program without the resources needed to fulfill its statutory responsibility.

IHSS Reductions – Urge Legislature to Continue to Reject All Proposals

The IHSS program in our county enables over 18,000 older adults and people with disabilities to avoid institutionalization by receiving essential care in their homes, delivered by approximately 12,000 providers. IHSS enhances quality of life by making it easier to live at home and reduces the time and financial burdens placed on family and friend caregivers. County social workers serve as the gateway to this program, conducting in-home assessments, authorizing service hours, and completing required annual reassessments to ensure services match individual needs.

The May Revision maintains the following reductions to IHSS:

- A significant cost shift (\$360.6 million General Fund statewide) to counties for growth in IHSS hours, beginning in FY 2027-28. This creates a substantial new cost burden with no additional revenues to support it and would effectively place a higher burden on 1991 Realignment funding that our county relies upon to support caseload and cost growth in IHSS and other social services and health and human services safety net programs.
- A shift of 100% of the Community First Choice Option (CFCO) penalties to counties for delayed reassessments. Our county is in strong support of the CWDA-proposed trailer bill language (TBL) that would preserve the current 50% State/50% county cost-sharing structure for CFCO reassessment penalties and address several critical implementation challenges faced by counties. The proposed TBL is necessary to ensure that the implementation of CFCO penalties is fair, transparent, and administratively workable for counties that are already under immense operational strain. Counties are already facing a statewide administrative shortfall of at least \$246 million total funds and have had to redirect scarce staff time away from timely intakes and urgent reassessments, creating further delays that jeopardize health and safety for IHSS applicants and recipients.

- A reduction of \$3.2 million General Fund to eliminate the permanent Backup Provider System (BUPS). BUPS prevents gaps in care when a regular IHSS provider is unavailable by matching IHSS recipients with short-term providers. Eliminating BUPS would leave recipients with no safety net, creating service gaps for consumers who rely on backup providers in emergency situations. Consumers with the most complex needs, especially those relying on backup providers, will face increased health risks and potential institutionalization. This modest investment in BUPS yields significant cost savings from avoidance in hospitalizations or other institutional settings.
- A reduction of \$56.2 million General Fund to automate the termination of IHSS recipients when their Medi-Cal is discontinued due to not completing their Medi-Cal redetermination. Auto-termination will disrupt care continuity and create payment lapses for providers. While framed as a cost containment measure, the “savings” would come from denying services to low-income older adults and people with disabilities. Even if Medi-Cal is restored, the lapse in payment for services creates a financial strain for providers, many of whom may choose to continue to deliver services without pay until Medi-Cal can be fully restored. These disruptions are not minor administrative delays; they represent lapses in essential care for individuals who cannot safely be left without assistance, increasing the likelihood of hospitalization or institutional placement.

Collectively, the APS and IHSS reductions would weaken critical protections for vulnerable Californians; increase the risk of abuse, neglect, homelessness, and institutionalization; destabilize the IHSS workforce, and shift unsustainable fiscal burdens onto counties. When taken together, these proposals exacerbate county fiscal pressures by shifting additional safety net costs all at a time when county resources are critical to mitigate the most severe impacts of H.R. 1.

For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors respectfully urges the Legislature to reject the proposed cuts and maintain the APS expansion and IHSS program integrity.

Sincerely,



Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members and Staff of the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Honorable Members and Staff of the Assembly Budget Committee
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA)
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
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