



ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL CENTER AGENCIES  
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January 28, 2011

Honorable Mark Leno,  
Chair, Senate Budget Committee  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Bob Blumenfield  
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Leno and Assemblyman Blumenfield:

On behalf of the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA), representing the 21 regional centers serving California's over 246,000 people with developmental disabilities, we are writing to share our concerns with you regarding the upcoming budget session.

We understand the startling magnitude of the state's current deficit. It is an unfortunate situation that will require sacrifices to be made on multiple fronts to close the gap and to get our state back on firm fiscal footing. We respect the work the Legislature must do in the coming weeks to prioritize the severity and level of reductions to be made in various state-funded programs.

However, we would like to draw your attention specifically to the Governor's proposed reductions to the developmental services budget for Fiscal Year 2011-12.

The proposed reduction to the developmental services system, which includes regional centers and their providers is \$750 million General Fund. While the proposal currently lacks a great deal of specificity in how those reductions will be achieved, we are gravely concerned about the reduction being so deep. The proposed \$750 million reduction comes on the heels of multiple and layered cuts to our already fragile community-based service delivery system.

Over the past decade alone, regional centers and their providers have been recipients of long-term cost containment measures. Rate freezes have been imposed on regional center community providers that have seriously hampered their ability to provide the level of quality services desired and needed by people with developmental disabilities. The proposed continuation of the 4.25% rate reduction to both the regional centers themselves as well as their providers results in less access and choice for our consumers as well as enormous case loads for service coordinators at the regional centers. Similar to case load crises in many other areas of human and social services, high case loads result in a lack of personalized care and choice in the development of an individualized program plan (IPP), the heart of the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act.

The regional center system has given a lion's share of its budget over the years through the rate freezes, unallocated reductions and the wholesale elimination of various service options, all the while experiencing increased caseloads and services needs.

Absent details to be found in pending trailer bill language, we continue to express deep concern about the year-over-year reductions this system has experienced despite the growth of our state's population, of which a percentage will always include people with developmental disabilities.

ARCA and the regional centers remain firmly committed to complying and implementing proposals as mandated by the Legislature, but we also caution policymakers to remember the real-life impact additional large reductions to this system will have on people's lives. People with developmental disabilities and their families greatly benefit from a fully functioning community-based regional center system. People are living, working and recreating in their neighborhoods, parks, grocery stores, libraries, and schools. The more costly alternative of developmental center placement runs contrary to the state's commitment to people with developmental disabilities that they would be able to reside in the least restrictive setting and enjoy life in the real world like other people without disabilities.

We urge the Legislature to consider the impact a \$750 million reduction would have on the lives of people with developmental disabilities in their communities.

ARCA and the regional centers look forward to engaging with the Legislature, the Department of Developmental Services, and the Administration to pare down the Governor's proposal to a sustainable amount that would demonstrate our commitment to the solvency of the state while also maintaining our deep commitment to ensuring community living for people with developmental disabilities.

We would like to continue serving as an information resource to the Legislature.

ARCA has published and made available our board approved statement on the Governor's proposed to your staff. We have also attached this document again for your information. If ARCA or the regional centers can be of assistance in any way, please do not hesitate to contact our office at (916) 446-7961.

Sincerely,

**ORIGINALLY SIGNED BY**

Robert J. Baldo  
Executive Director

Cc: Members, Assembly Budget Committee  
Members, Senate Budget Committee  
Diane Van Maren, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee  
Daisy Gonzales, Assembly Budget Committee  
Kirk Feely, Senate Republican Fiscal Office  
Julie Souliere, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office  
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