

California Commission on Aging

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GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor

Executive Director
Karol Swartzlander

June 11, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

The California Commission on Aging (CCoA) is designated in statute as the principal advocate for older adults before the Administration, the Legislature, and state and local agencies, charged with advising on issues affecting the health and well-being of older Californians. Our members are appointed by the Governor, Senate Rules Committee and Assembly Speaker, representing a wealth of expertise from both within and outside the field of aging.

CCoA applauds your historic and ongoing leadership in support of LGBT people, communities of color and women to ensure justice for all. On June 5, in addition to calling for criminal justice reform, you acknowledged that urgent action is needed to secure educational equity, economic justice, and accessible and affordable healthcare for all Californians. The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on older adults has been well-documented and has shone a harsh spotlight on the issues and deficiencies in the systems that serve older Californians. As you know, the California Department of Public Health has begun highlighting the impact on communities of color. We applaud this prioritization because adults of Latino, African American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Island heritage are dying from COVID-19 at disproportionately higher levels relative to their representation in our population.

As noted in our previous correspondence, CCoA opposes the May Revise proposal to eliminate the Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP) and Community Based Adult Services (CBAS) program. It is notable that of the 10,000 frail older adults MSSP serves, 75 percent are age 75+ and half of participants are older adults of color. Over half of the 36,000 CBAS participants are from communities of color and 41 percent are limited English proficient.

Eliminating these programs and reducing other services will perpetuate ongoing ageism, structural and systemic racism, healthcare disparities and economic inequality for older Californians.

CCoA is releasing the attached paper, *Solving the Economic Security Gap for California's Older Adults*, which examines the trends in population growth, diversity and economic inequity experienced by many older adults. The paper recognizes the cumulative, long-term impact of systemic racism and discrimination impacting the vulnerability of older adults, particularly those who are women, LGBT, and people of color. The paper also features innovative programs and outlines recommendations to address many inequities.

We hope you find this paper timely and informative. The California Commission on Aging stands ready to work with you on these and any other issues impacting older adults in California.

Mahatma Gandhi said, “The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members.” CCoA urges the Administration to consider proposed Legislative budget solutions that continue to fund the programs that support low-income, frail older Californians, individuals with disabilities and their caregivers, thereby honoring your deep resolve and commitment to social justice and the establishment of a Master Plan for Aging.

Sincerely,



Betsy Butler
Chair

CC:

Toni G. Atkins, Senate President pro Tempore

Anthony Rendon, Speaker of the Assembly

Richard Figueroa, Deputy Cabinet Secretary

Dr. Mark Ghaly, Secretary, California Health and Human Services Agency

Keely Martin Bosler, Director, California Department of Finance

Kim McCoy Wade, Director, California Department of Aging