



## California Immigrant Welfare Collaborative

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# **SCHWARZENEGGER TAKES \$751 FROM EVERY BLIND, DISABLED, AGED CALIFORNIAN IN BUDGET**

## ***Poor Family of Three Lose \$1,074 in State Aid***

(Sacramento) Lost amidst the chest-thumping in Sacramento over resolving the state budget stalemate is the startling fact that rather than asking the wealthiest Californians to help balance the budget, Governor Schwarzenegger instead has insisted that money earmarked for blind, disabled and aged Californians – and participants of CalWORKs, the program meant to help poor families with children successfully transition from welfare to work – be radically reduced.

The budget deal celebrated by Governor Schwarzenegger and some legislators will result in every blind, aged and disabled recipient of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and CAPI (Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants) losing about \$751 in assistance used for basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter over the next two years. Under the terms of the deal, a typical family of three enrolled in CalWORKs will lose \$1,074 in assistance over the next two years.

"The governor had promised to represent all Californians, but this budget targets the most vulnerable once again for a disproportionate share of the burden of solving the states fiscal crisis," said Jeannette Zanipatin, Statewide Policy Analyst with the California Immigrant Welfare Collaborative. "What he's done, in effect, is levied a tax on California's poorest and most vulnerable populations."

The decision to take federal funds for the blind, aged and disabled is the 12<sup>th</sup> time in 17 years that their aid has been either cut or denied a COLA. SSI/SSP and CAPI recipients do not receive Food Stamps and only 1 percent have earnings from work, meaning they have almost no way to increase their income. "These severe cuts are shortsighted and will result in increased demands for emergency shelter, food, and utility help," said Kim McCoy Wade of the California Association of Food Banks. "More than ever SSI recipients will have to chose between paying for needed medicines or buying food. This is cruel and beneath the dignity of a wealthy state like California."

CalWORKs benefits in California are just \$29 more than they were in 1989, when a gallon of milk only cost a dollar. Today, a gallon of milk costs nearly four dollars. A family of three will have to do without \$29 a month in 2006 and \$59 a month in 2007.