

Good morning,

Although I was not able to attend the rally in Sacramento yesterday, I did listen to the Governor's State of the State address online. I was struck by several points in his address in relation to the impact upon fair funding for the vendored services which we have all advocated for over the past several years and particularly during this past year in requesting and across the board 10% increase in rates.

The Governor began his address by emphasizing 2 measures to secure the future of our state:

-build up the "Rainy Day Fund"

-"you are not going to hear me talk about new programs"

In spite of these apparent priorities he went on to outline at least 3 ways that he was going to use some of the surplus funds for his priorities.

1. The state will begin providing full health coverage to children of undocumented workers.

Even though there are differences of opinion on the merits of this proposal, this comes at a cost that was not even mentioned. Additionally, is this not a new program which he started by saying we would not hear him talk about?

2. There was priority given to pay for the retirement liabilities, pensions and lifelong health benefits of state and university workers about which he said, "it is our moral obligation to do so". This has been a huge problem for the past several years. It's interesting that this issue is a "moral obligation" but providing fair wages and benefits for those who care for those with disabilities does not seem to be of the same necessity. State and university workers already receive wages and benefits that surpass those within the vendor community.

3. 2 billion dollars of the temporary surplus funds are being proposed to repair and replace aging state structures which he said, "neglecting what we have built over many years". If 2 billion can be set aside for the neglect of buildings why can't some of the surplus also be used for a service system that also has been neglected for many years now?

It was also interesting to note that as the Governor talked about the water needs and infrastructure in our state he talked about the needs of both fish and people by saying, "Every one of us and every creature that dwells here form a complex system which must be understood and respected, even revered". This is a true statement not only in regards to our water needs but the same thinking can be applied to all human needs. Do not the needs and care of those with disabilities need also to be understood and respected, even revered?

As various advocacy efforts move forward during the next few months I believe that the aforementioned priorities of the Governor must be challenged by our legislators. If our

legislators simply give in to his demands again this year they have not done their job. He even said that we can expect more of the same priority for his remaining 3 years in office.

If there is no push back from our legislators again this year all of their apparent supportive gestures are simply political rhetoric.

Standing together for those who cannot speak for themselves,

Stan Higgins, Executive Director

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