



LUTHERAN OFFICE of PUBLIC POLICY -CALIFORNIA

March 13, 2024

The Honorable Robert Rivas
Speaker
California State Assembly
1021 O St, Suite 8330
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Mike McGuire
Pro Temp
California State Senate
1021 O St, Suite 8610
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
1021 O St, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Scott Wiener
Chair, Senate Committee on Budget & Fiscal
Review
1020 N St, Room 502
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Lutheran Office of Public Policy-California Response to Governor's Proposed Jan 10 Budget

Dear Budget Leaders of the California State Legislature,

As the Lutheran Office of Public Policy-California (LOPPCA), we write to respond to Governor Newsom's Proposed 2024 Budget. We offer our concerns in the spirit of audacious hope that our legislature can act to ensure the economic, environmental, and physical well-being of the most vulnerable Californians.

Our Lutheran values emphasize the pursuit of a sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all and the stewardship of creation for the benefit of our shared health and wellbeing. Congregations in LOPPCA's network are committed to walking alongside our neighbors and advocating for a state budget and policies that reflect these values.

We note with concern the significant delays and cuts in funding that will affect the following key areas:

- Human service programs, including CalWORKs supportive services;
- Cuts to the state's School Meals for All program recently proposed by the LAO;
- Housing and homelessness programs, including the Multifamily Housing Program, CalHome, the Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention Program, and all Department of Social Service programs that provide housing stabilization for critical communities such as foster youth, older adults, and CalWORKs recipients;
- Climate change and environmental programs and services, including Clean Cars 4 All and other ZEV equity projects, the Active Transportation Program, the Equitable Building Decarbonization Program, the Regional Climate Collaboratives Program, the Community



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Resilience Centers Program, Watershed Climate Resilience programs, the Extreme Heat & Community Resilience Program, and the California Nutrition Incentive Program

We appreciate that the budget proposal includes pathways for new revenues. We stand in partnership with our coalitions and congregations in urging this legislature to seek additional sustainable state revenue sources, including curtailing fossil fuel subsidies and considering a wealth tax such as previously proposed in AB 259 (Lee). Funding delays and cuts will put years of progress in jeopardy while unduly harming California's most vulnerable communities. Additional revenue sources must be found.

LOPPCA represents the coordinated witness of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) on issues of public policy in the state of California. In addition to our presence on legislative matters in Sacramento, we provide education and networking for our 400 ELCA congregations across the state, while working hand in hand with other faith-based and secular groups seeking peace and justice.

We thank you for your leadership and look forward to engaging with you further to address these critical funding gaps as the budget process continues.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'RQ Banks', with a small dot at the end.

Regina Q. Banks
Director, Lutheran Office of Public Policy – California