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June 9, 2021

Ms. Keely Martin Bosler, Director
Department of Finance
Room 1145, State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Ms. Bosler:

In a letter dated May 27, 2021, you notified the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, pursuant to the provisions of Section 28.00 of the *2020-21 Budget Act*, of a request from the Department of Social Services (DSS) to increase its federal expenditure authority in Item 5180-151-0890 by a combined amount of \$64,602,000. Specifically, DSS was awarded \$9,477,000 from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 for Adult Protective Services Programs which will be allocated to counties for COVID-19-related services for vulnerable adults. In addition, DSS received \$47,280,000 from the federal government for the John. H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. These funds will be used for direct grants and housing vouchers for California's older foster youth.

I note that the total amount requested in the letter for child welfare was \$55,125,000. However, I subsequently learned this amount includes \$7,845,000 of additional federal funding (separate from the Chafee program), which is included in the administration's 2021-22 May Revision budget proposal and does not need to be spent in the current fiscal year. Therefore, I do not approve this component of the Section 28.00 letter.

I want to express my concern about the length of time it took to develop a plan to distribute the Chafee funding to our foster youth. The funding was approved by Congress in December 2020 and allocating the funding should have been a top priority. In the future, I urge the administration to seek legislative approval through other avenues for items that are this important. This could have easily been included in the early budget actions that the Legislature approved this year. Early legislative involvement would have allowed for a more thorough discussion about how best to distribute the grants and could have resulted in a more timely distribution of the funds.

Moreover, I am not convinced the Adult Protective Supervision request meets all of the technical requirements of Section 28.00. Specifically, Section 28.00 states, “augmentations for items which can be deferred to the 2021-22 fiscal year should be included in the administration’s 2021-22 fiscal year budget proposals.” The terms of the grant give DSS until September 2022 to fully expend the funding.

Despite my concerns and to ensure the distribution of funding is not further delayed, I concur with the request and waive the remainder of the 30-day review period.

Sincerely,


Nancy Skinner
Chair

cc: Members of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee