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Advocates, families and providers hold all-day rally outside Maria Shriver's "Women's Conference" in Long Beach challenging Governor to restore Stage 3 childcare funding

Elimination of stage 3 child care just one of many reckless cuts that jeopardizes California's economic and family recovery, say HHS experts.

Long Beach, CA – Hundreds of women, children, working families, health and human services advocates and child care providers will converge outside Maria Shriver's annual "Women's Conference" in Long Beach on Tuesday, October 26, to urge Governor Schwarzenegger to restore funding to Stage 3 child care, just one of the many programs that suffered as a result of the Governor's line-item vetoes.

Participants in Tuesday's rally and press-conference, which will take place from the early morning to early evening, will be highlighting the local and statewide impacts of the Governor's decision, which will include eliminating quality child care services for more than 17,000 LA county children; forcing nearly 12,000 local families to choose between going to work or staying home to take care of their children; and forcing an estimated 6,000 LA county child care centers to close their businesses.

"The Governor's plans to attend this year's 'Women's Conference' is particularly ironic," said Astrid Campos, Organizer for California Partnership. "While the impacts of the Governor's 'blue pencil' cuts will be widespread, California women will likely suffer the most. Many of the programs vetoed by the Governor in the state budget play a direct role in the empowerment of women, by allowing them to have an opportunity to go to work, go to school, and to thrive and succeed."

Following the legislature's passage of the state budget in early October, the Governor quickly proceeded to use his line-item veto powers to slash an additional \$1 billion in funding from several crucial health care and human services programs. Among the many other cuts in the Governor's line-item veto package includes cutting \$366 million from CalWORKS, and \$100 million from state health programs, such as AIDS local assistance programs, county health programs and community clinic grants.

The HHS Network of California, a broad coalition of organizations throughout the state fighting to preserve and protect health and human services programs that empower families and create jobs, denounced the cuts as “disastrous,” and fundamentally at odds with the compromise budget agreement that previously prevented the Governor’s proposed \$5.4 billion in cuts.

Experts and advocates contest the rationale behind these steep reductions to essential services, which they say put the state’s much needed economic and family recovery in jeopardy. The elimination of stage 3 child care will cost the state 60,000 jobs alone; but, the broader impacts of these cuts will prove even more harmful down the road.

“By implementing significant spending cuts to programs such as CalWORKS, child care, and community colleges, the Governor is undermining the very programs that ensure California retains a strong, well-trained and balanced workforce capable of revitalizing the state’s weakened economy, “ said Jessica Rothhaar, Program Director, Health Access California.

“Similarly, strong health and human services programs have a proven history of contributing significantly to the state’s overall economic strength – not only by creating and maintaining hundreds of thousands of public sector jobs, but are also responsible for private sector job creation as well, and helping provide families with the opportunities to get back on their feet and back to work.”

For more information, please visit the HHS Network of California website at www.hhsnetworkca.org, or contact Brian Rice at 510-271-0640 x 106, or e-mail at brian@fcpcommunications.com.

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