



MEDIA ADVISORY

For Friday, April 8, 2011

CONTACT:

Jessica Rothhaar, 415-517-0439

Mollie Culver, 805-550-9300

SLO faithful chide Sen. Sam Blakeslee for excessive partisanship; urge the Senator to support budget revenues to help stem rising hunger and homelessness in district

WHAT: **Faith and Community Rally/March for a Just Budget** – dozens of constituents led by faith and community leaders from California's 15th Senate District rally to urge Senator Sam Blakeslee to prevent additional cuts to California's health care, schools, and human services programs by voting for the Governor's modest revenue proposals.

WHEN: **FRIDAY**, April 8th at 11:30 AM

WHERE: Rally at SLO County Courthouse
1050 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, CA
Followed by march to the City Library where Sen. Blakeslee will be speaking.

WHO: Rev. Caroline Hall, Co-President, Central Coast Clergy + Laity for Justice
Dee Torres, Homeless Services Program Director, Community Action Partnership of SLO
Wendy Lewis, Deputy Director, Community Food Bank Coalition of SLO County
Peter Laarman, Executive Director, Progressive Christians Uniting

VISUALS: Dozens of constituents, clergy members, faith and community leaders and SLO County residents chanting, rallying and marching with signs, placards and posters to stem rising hunger and homelessness by supporting Governor Brown's modest revenue extensions.

San Luis Obispo, CA – On Friday, April 8th, local clergy members and community leaders will lead constituents from California's 15th Senate district in a faith-based rally and march in downtown San Luis Obispo (SLO) to express their disappointment in State Senator Sam Blakeslee's refusal to vote in favor of the Governor's modest revenue package.

Following the rally, participants will march from the San Luis Obispo county courthouse to the downtown library, where Senator Blakeslee is scheduled to be speaking. Outside, advocates and individuals will “bear witness” to the thousands of Californians who will be severely impacted by the steep cuts to essential health care and human services programs, including Medi-Cal, CalWORKS, Adult Day Health Care, and others.

Speakers will share their personal stories of how they and their loved ones have already suffered under the Governor’s \$12.4 billion in spending cuts, and what another \$12 billion in cuts would mean if the Governor’s revenues, which include proposals eliminating two corporate tax breaks and loopholes and extending the current rates for California’s personal income tax, sales tax and the vehicle license fee (VLF), are not included in the 2011-12 state budget.

“We’re here today to send a clear message to Senator Blakeslee,” said Rev. Caroline Hall, Priest at St. Benedict’s Episcopal Church in Los Osos and Co-President of Central Coast Clergy & Laity for Justice.

“Californians just suffered \$12.4 billion in spending cuts, the impact of which will be most tragically felt among the Senator’s most vulnerable constituents. These are indeed tough times, and will require tough decisions. It’s time to look at our priorities and our values. Are we willing to force thousands more vulnerable residents to forego access to critical services in order to cut our taxes and maintain lucrative tax breaks and loopholes for corporations?”

In San Luis Obispo County alone, where unemployment levels continue to soar at 9.8%, the potential impacts of an “all-cuts” budget would be particularly dramatic. As it stands, between 2,500 and 4,000 SLO residents are homeless; more than 13,000 residents are currently unemployed; and a staggering 40,000 residents, almost 40% of them children, either go hungry on a regular basis or don’t know where their next meal will come from. Any additional spending cuts on top of the \$12.4 billion already imposed on core public programs would further undermine local efforts to stem rising homelessness and hunger in the area, and help struggling families get back on their feet.

Friday’s action comes after Governor Brown announced last week that budget negotiations had come to a halt after Republican legislators insisted that the Governor and Democrats concede to a list of 53 concessions in exchange for a vote for the Governor’s revenue package. Last month, Governor Brown signed the package calling for \$12.4 billion in spending cuts, which comes on top of the \$16 billion cuts from health and human services over the last three years.

For more information, please contact Jessica Rothhaar at 415-517-0439 or Mollie Culver at 805-550-9300. You can also visit the HHS Network online at www.hhsnetworkca.org.

###