Mid-Year Update from FCLCA/FCL Education Fund

June 29, 2023

Legislature and governor reach agreement on state budget

The big news this week is that the Legislature and governor have reached an agreement on the 2023-24 state budget. While it’s hard to summarize a $310 billion spending plan, the overall good news is that, despite a $31 billion deficit, the final budget preserves progress we have made in addressing poverty and strengthening the safety net. As Shimica Gaskins, a spokesperson for End Child Poverty in California (one of the coalitions FCLCA is most active in) writes, “Governor Newsom and Legislative leaders are applauded for making clear from the outset that, despite the budget problem, we would learn from the mistakes of the devastating Great Recession cuts. This budget ends the conversation that austerity is the right approach during downturns: anti-poverty programs are needed more during hard times, and support economic recovery through their tremendous return on investment.”

The budget even offers some additional progress on issues that FCLCA has advocated for this year. For example, the 2023-24 state budget: reforms onerous family fees for publicly funded childcare, with no fees to those who make below 75 percent of median income; provides $82 million to lower Covered California co-pays and deductibles; provides for a permanent 10% increase in CalWORKs for low-income families; provides a summertime food program for four million children and includes a pilot to raise the CalFresh minimum; provides $1 billion in Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention (HHAP) funding to support Round 5 of local efforts to reduce and prevent homelessness and states the intent to fund a Round 6; includes the Legislature’s intent to close additional prisons and requires CDCR to produce a preliminary (August 15, 2023) and final (November 15, 2023) assessment of state prison operational and housing requirements to assist the Legislature in making decisions related to prison closures.

In the area of environment, Gov. Newsom had proposed cutting last year’s promised investment of $54 billion for climate programs by $6 billion, but the Legislature objected, and the two parties negotiated a final number of $51.4 billion. This year’s budget provides an additional $2.1 billion to the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, as well as providing $1.25 billion for climate and energy programs to protect key investments in coastal resilience and clean energy.

The Legislature and governor negotiated a deal that ended a standoff on the governor’s proposed infrastructure package – the deal includes a package of five bills to speed up lawsuits on solar farms and reservoirs and other large projects. We’ve posted more information on the final budget on our website www.fclca.org under Education Center.

Bills Move Forward

FCLCA has weighed in on over 100 bills in 2023; those that were passed by their house of origin are now in the second house and will be heard by a policy committee by July 14. FCLCA-supported bills that have passed their policy committee hearing to date include:

- SB 94, which would provide persons sentenced to death or life without parole with the finding of a special circumstance, the opportunity to have their sentence reviewed provided they have served at least 20 years and the offense occurred prior to June 5, 1990.
- SB 225, the Community Anti Displacement and Preservation Fund to provide more affordable housing.
- SB 227, to provide unemployment insurance to undocumented workers.

Bills passed by policy committees that have a fiscal impact will be heard by the Appropriations Committee and must be passed before going on to a floor vote before the full house. The Legislature has until September 14, 2023, to pass bills, which then go to the governor, who has until October 14, 2023, to respond. Visit www.fclca.org for more information.