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February 6, 2008

To: County Supervisors
County Administrators and Executives
County Public Information Officers

From: Roger Dickinson, Chair, CSAC Human Services Funding Deficit Work Group and
Sacramento County Supervisor

Re: Human Services Funding Deficit Educational Effort

I am writing to urge your participation in our efforts to secure adequate state funding to remedy the human services funding deficit (formerly referred to as the "Cost of Doing Business"). As you can see from the attached county-by-county chart, this shortfall is costing counties almost a billion dollars annually.

CSAC is making the human services funding deficit a priority in 2008, and I am asking all county supervisors to elevate this important issue within your counties and among your legislative delegations. In these difficult budget times, we need to work together and fight to obtain the necessary funding to operate these state mandated programs. Your Board's midyear budget updates or legislative policy discussions are the perfect time to bring this important issue to the forefront.

State funding for programs such as child welfare, foster care eligibility, adult protective services, adoptions, food stamps administration, CalWORKs eligibility and In-Home Supportive Services administration have been frozen at 2000-01 levels, leaving counties in the difficult position of either reducing critical services or absorbing the costs of these mandated programs. In fact, the Schwarzenegger Administration estimated in May 2007 that the state should have paid counties **\$835 million** more in 2006-07 just to operate these critical programs. Unfortunately, this year's budget situation is worse; the budget deficit is \$14.5 billion and the Governor's January 10 proposed Budget includes additional significant cuts to county funding for administration of these programs.

In light of these recent events, one might think that our six-year battle to regain from the state the reasonable actual costs for operating these programs is now completely futile. But these lean budget times only underscore the fact that no other sector of the state's budget has been as tight as funding for social services, and that counties have been bearing the brunt of these cuts since 2001. In fact, we see an opportunity to raise this issue when the Governor talks about across-the-board cuts and equity: Where is the equity in reducing administrative funding to counties on top of huge year-over-year funding shortfalls?

The other side of the coin is to remember that a slowing economy creates higher demand for social services. Because of this, counties could be on the hook for even higher General Fund costs at the exact same time that the state, already derelict on funding since 2001, is proposing to cut the critical remaining funds we need to meet rising caseloads and increased regulatory oversight.

As county supervisors, we cannot let this situation rest. As chair of the CSAC Human Services Funding Deficit Work Group, I am asking you to immediately take three actions to help us in this fight:



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1. Educate yourself on the human services funding deficit issue by speaking with your county administrator and department heads about the impact in your county. Ask them to translate how the lack of funding directly affects services to your constituents, and place this issue on your Board agenda. Also, find out what your reasonable actual costs are and how the Governor's additional proposed cuts might further affect your local system.
2. Use the interest in your county's budget and the state's fiscal situation to raise the human services funding deficit issue during board meetings and with your constituents, legislative delegation, and local media. We have attached talking points to help you explain the significant impact the human services funding deficit is having on your county.
3. Report back to us on your actions and the reactions you receive. We will need to hear about your interaction with legislators, community groups, and the media to understand how your local experience will affect our overall effort. This will also help us to develop additional strategies as the state budget is being debated in Sacramento.

In the meantime, the Human Services Funding Deficit Work Group will continue to meet and work to frame the issue in four main areas – political, media, grassroots, and legal – so that we can develop a comprehensive action plan for counties. Your commitment and cooperation in the coming year on this issue will be critical, and I want to thank you in advance for your assistance.

We have attached two documents for your review: A quick list of each county's human services funding deficit and a one-page talking points document. I think you'll find these materials both startling and helpful. If you have questions, please contact me or Kelly Brooks of CSAC at 916.327.7500, or kbrooks@counties.org.

I want to thank you again for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roger Dickinson', written in a cursive style.

Roger Dickinson
Sacramento County Supervisor

*Attachments: Human Services Funding Deficit Talking Points
County-by-County Human Services Funding Deficit Figures*