

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



FROM: Executive Office

SUBMITTAL DATE:
December 22, 2009

SUBJECT: 2010 State Legislative Platform

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board approve the 2009 State Legislative Platform and direct the Executive Office and the county's Sacramento representatives to advance the legislative proposals contained here.

BACKGROUND: Each year the Board adopts a State Legislative Platform to guide the legislative advocacy efforts at the state level. The Executive Office worked with Board members, department and state advocates in developing the State Platform. Previously approved Board positions from earlier state platforms are still in effect. The 2010 platform includes: Key State Legislative priorities, new existing policy items, selected policy items of continuing importance, and finally the Urban County Caucus state positions are presented for Board approval. Due to the dynamic nature of the legislative process, additional state legislative issues of concern to the county will be brought forward to the Board for appropriate action throughout the year as the need arises.

Departmental Concurrence

Attachment

Gary M. Christmas

Gary M. Christmas
Chief Deputy County Executive Officer

FINANCIAL DATA	Current F.Y. Total Cost:	\$ 0	In Current Year Budget:	N/A
	Current F.Y. Net County Cost:	\$ 0	Budget Adjustment:	N/A
	Annual Net County Cost:	\$ 0	For Fiscal Year:	N/A

SOURCE OF FUNDS:	Positions To Be Deleted Per A-30	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Requires 4/5 Vote	<input type="checkbox"/>

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE

BY:

Jay E. Orr

Jay E. Orr

County Executive Office Signature

- Policy
- Policy
- Consent
- Consent

Dept Recomm.:
Per Exec. Ofc.:

Prev. Agn. Ref.: 3.6 1/19/07

District:

Agenda Number:

3.71

TABLE OF CONTENTS

State Legislative Priorities.....	1
New State Legislative Policy Items.....	6
Selected Existing State Legislative Policy Positions.....	21
Urban Counties Caucus Priorities.....	23
Urban Counties Caucus Budget Principles.....	26
Urban Counties Caucus Legislative Policies.....	28



State Legislative Priorities

State Budget Priorities

- Oppose reductions in state programs that require increased local funding to maintain the same level of service.
- Oppose reduced state funding for county-administered state programs unless there is a commensurate reduction in the county's responsibility to provide for the program.
- Oppose any state efforts to shift costs or federal penalties from the state to local government.
- Protect Proposition 1A and other measures that require the state to fulfill its requirement to support local government.
- Support measures that enhance or maintain the county's revenue base.
- Oppose any measures that limit the county's ability to operate in a reasonable and cost effective manner.

Access to Health Care

There is a tremendous disparity between counties and regions in California in funding for Health and Mental Health Services. The disparity is historical since most programs are funded on a first come, first served basis. State funding is disconnected from population, so high growth counties, suffer even more disparity. Riverside County receives close to the least dollars per capita in the State, for health and mental health.

According to a published report in *The Press-Enterprise*, dated August 23, 2009, in Fiscal year 2006-07, Riverside County came in 57th out of the state's 58 counties in the amount it received per capita in what is called health and mental health realignment money, according to data from the California State Controller's Office. That year, the state distributed nearly \$2.8 billion for health care to the poor.

Riverside County got \$45.24 per capita, while the state median was \$75.75 per capita. San Bernardino County ranked 52nd. It received \$57.05 per capita.

Meanwhile, San Francisco County ranked No. 1, receiving almost \$200 per capita.

The county should support or sponsor action or legislation that will promote equity in funding so that Riverside County residents have the same access to health care as other residents in other counties.

Corrections

- Preserving public safety is a key priority for both state and local governments. Essential components of the public safety system are the interconnected state and local corrections systems.
- Support state funding to improve, expand and renovate local correction facilities.
- Support state correctional programs that recognize and promote innovation at the local level and permit maximum flexibility so that state funds can target local community needs.
- Oppose state-mandated correctional programs that do not have dedicated, sustained funding sources.

Human Services Funding Deficit

Counties operate a number of human services programs for the state. Statewide the annual shortfall between actual county expenses to operate these programs and state reimbursement has grown to over \$1 billion. This increased cost of doing business has created a funding gap that forces counties to either reduce services to vulnerable populations or divert county resources from other critical local services.

- Support legislation that requires the state to fully reimburse the county for the increasing costs of providing state-mandated human services programs.
- Oppose measures that would freeze, delay, defer or suspend state payments to the county for programs, including human services.
- Support efforts to reform the state budgeting of human services programs so that funding is based on the reasonable cost to deliver services instead of out-dated formulas.



New State Legislative Policy Items

Issue: Medi-Cal Part B Buy-In "Yo Yo" Cases.

Position: Support or sponsor legislation to change the deduction policy for eligibility in the Aged and Disabled FPL/Blind FPL programs. Making the monthly Part B premium a permanent deduction in the income calculations for the Aged, Blind and Disabled Group will eliminate the month-to-month changes in eligibility and stabilize the recipient's participation in the assistance program.

Background: As a cost saving measure, California eliminated the Medicare Part B Buy-In for Medi-Cal recipients with a share of cost over \$500 in November 2008. The policy inadvertently created issues for a group of people who sometimes slip past federal poverty levels because of slight increases in Social Security benefits. This group of recipients was then required to pay a \$96.40 monthly premium, which in turn decreases their gross income, placing them back at the federal poverty rate. This has created a month-to-month change in eligibility for the A&D FPL/Blind FPL programs, causing confusion and concern among its elderly recipients.

Essentially, this interplay between the two programs causes recipients to "yo-yo" in between the two programs from one month to the next, with no end in sight due to the rules of these two programs. It causes confusion for both clients and county staff. Clients receive monthly confusing notices and the state may be required to issue checks to reimburse for out-of-pocket expenses incurred by impacted clients.

Possible Fiscal Effects: The affected group is already eligible for Medi-Cal based on the share of cost program, so changes in the deduction policy would not increase eligibility. Furthermore, there is an opportunity for savings for the state from the elimination of check reimbursements from out-of-pocket expenses. The bill is cost-neutral with respect to county administration because counties did not receive any new funding to process these complex cases and have been doing so out of their existing allocations, meaning that other workload has not been processed timely.

Known support and/or opposition: Western Center on Law and Poverty, Health Access, and other health care, senior and disability advocacy groups will support. The Administration likely will have to be convinced that this approach is cost-neutral with respect to benefits.

Issue: Exchange of confidential information between Multi Disciplinary Teams (MDT) and CalWORK's Eligibility Workers.

Action: Support or sponsor legislation to clarify that CalWORKs eligibility workers can be included in cross agency collaboration for coordination of CalWORKs and Child Welfare case planning.

Background: Current state law on the exchange of case management information for MDT's is unclear about the participation of CalWORKs eligibility workers. However, for cases that include both the Child Welfare system and CalWORKs, collaboration between the agencies ensures the consistency of the case plan.

The Linkages program is used by many counties as the model approach to achieve these goals. The Linkages program coordinates the CalWORKs eligibility worker, the CalWORKs employment specialist and the Child Welfare social worker for families who participate in both programs. The collaboration ensures that the family receives consistent information to remain in compliance with both agencies.

There are multiple code sections in the WIC that govern the exchange of confidential case information for the purpose of coordinated case planning. However, current state statute does not specifically authorize CalWORKs eligibility workers to participate in multi-disciplinary team meetings. This is because the MDT members are defined as persons who are trained in the prevention, identification and treatment of child abuse and the information exchanged is relevant to their work. This description is interpreted by most counties and their counsel to exclude the participation of the CalWORKs eligibility worker.

Possible Fiscal Effects: None. A Linkages program is optional to the counties, but for those utilizing such an approach, minor savings and improved outcomes in both CalWORKs welfare to work and Child Welfare family stability are possible.

Proposal's sponsor (If not DPSS):

Likely Support or Opposition: No opposition expected. The California Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) has taken a Support position on this proposal.

Issue: Stepparent Adoptions Fee.

Position: Support or sponsor legislation that amends the Family Code to allow for a fee scale for stepparent adoption. The fee scale should be adjustable to actual costs for families who can afford to pay. Protections should remain to defer, waive or reduce fees based on need.

Background: The fee set in statute for stepparent adoptions has not been adjusted since 1992. Investigation services for a stepparent adoption require the work of a probation officer, qualified court investigator, licensed clinical social worker, licensed marriage family therapist, or, at the option of the Board of Supervisors, the County Welfare Department. The current fee no longer covers the cost of the services provided for stepparent adoptions.

The Family Code specifies that in a stepparent adoption, the prospective adoptive parent is liable for all reasonable costs incurred up to \$700. The court, probation officer, qualified court investigator, or County Welfare Department may defer, waive, or reduce the fee if its payment would cause economic hardship to the prospective adoptive parent and would be detrimental to the welfare of the adopted child. This \$700 fee has been the same since 1992 and no longer covers even minimal costs by the investigator. If the services of the county's Welfare Department are required, they are usually performed at a loss.

Fiscal Impact: Families who can afford to pay will be charged reasonable costs for the service.

Known support and/or opposition: CWDA has taken a support position on this proposal. Some advocate groups may oppose any fee increase on principle.

Issue: Trial home visits for reunification of foster children.

Position: Support legislation that clarifies state law to allow for a 60-day trial home visit as part of a family reunification plan. The legislation should allow the child to remain eligible for federal funding during the trial home visit.

Background: Federal law allows for trial home visits up to six months during which a child can return to the parental home without losing federal eligibility for funds. California law once also allowed for a 60-day trial home visit, but the provision disappeared as part of Senate Bill 243 in 1989.

Without the provision in state law, several state appellate decisions appear to prohibit trial home visits. Federal law maintains eligibility during the trial home visit and specific language in California law should allow for the same provision. This will allow the child to receive federal funding without establishing a new eligibility window if reunification services are unsuccessful and the child is placed back into foster care.

Trial home visits are an effective component of family reunification plans. They offer agencies an opportunity to offer family services, which result in measurable outcomes such as better parenting skills and coping mechanisms.

FISCAL IMPACT: Cost neutral. The proposal may extend Family Reunification services two months, but costs would be offset by a reduced number of foster care re-entries.

Known support and/or opposition: CWDA has taken a support position on this proposal. No opposition is anticipated.

Issue: Title IV-E Relative Home Re-approvals.

Position: Support legislation to clarify in state law that payment of federal funds to eligible foster children placed with approved relative caregivers shall not be terminated or disrupted during the annual reassessment process.

Background: State regulations require termination of aid to relative caregivers if the annual reassessment process is delayed. This practice is not equally required for county/state licensed foster family homes that also receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care (AFDC-FC).

Federal law does not require the termination of aid. When federal aid is discontinued, county and state funds must be used in the interim.

Fiscal Impact: Workload savings are anticipated and reduction in the state's liability for repayment of unnecessary IV-E overpayments.

Known support and/or opposition: CWDA has taken a support position on this proposal. No opposition is anticipated.

Issue: Sharp increases in demand for mental health services are expected from the release of state prison parolees in 2010. Current parolee mental health programs are severely limited and inadequate. Publicly-funded community mental health programs continue to experience significant funding cuts and are unable to meet increased demands for services. Without mental health and transitional housing support for parolees, high recidivism rates will result in increased state and federal costs for the court and judicial systems.

Action: 1) Support or sponsor legislation that establishes a priority program of continuity of mental health care for parolees identified to have a critical need. The program would allow for an assessment of mental health needs and help avoid the abrupt termination of treatment upon release from prison. Establish funding sources that would support the program.

2) Request a temporary source of funding for mental health services that includes transitional supportive housing for parolees. The funds could be diverted from categorical funding to law enforcement and the court system as a means to offset the burden of increased demands for community mental health services.

3) Track results to prove the cost-saving potential of providing continuity of mental health care for parolees. Demonstrate the savings from reductions in law enforcement services, judicial system involvement and inpatient care.

Background: Reductions in prison population resulting from court-mandates and budgetary actions will force an increased number of parolees to seek mental health care from publicly funded sources upon release. These points of service have already experienced significant reductions in funding and capacity and are currently functioning at or well above capacity. MHSA funds are prohibited from being used to serve parolees. Failure to adequately address this problem at the mental health point of service will result in higher levels of local incarceration and in-patient mental health care and higher utilization of the judicial system. All of these consequences are more costly than serving the mental health needs of parolees at existing points of service.

Issue: Mental health professionals share the similar vulnerabilities and risks to their safety as public defenders, parole agents and sworn officers. The identities of mental health professionals can be easily revealed through license plate searches and vehicle identification numbers.

Action: Determine the California Vehicle Code section and other state codes that protect or “blind”, for the safety of public defenders, parole agents, sworn officers and others, the identity of a registered vehicle owner from a search using a license plate or vehicle identification number.

Assess the feasibility of creating an “opt-in” program for licensed and unlicensed mental health professionals and support staff (who are also at risk) to enroll in a program to protect their identities from a search using a license plate or vehicle identification number.

If “opt-in” program is feasible, support or sponsor legislation to amend existing statutes to establish the “opt-in” program for licensed and unlicensed mental health professionals and support staff.

Background: Mental health professionals face the risk of violence, stalking and other forms of danger and nuisance as a result of their patient and family contact. An expansive array of sources available on the Internet will provide a registered owner’s identity by submitting a license plate number or vehicle identification number and vice versa. Many of these services are advertised as free. Effective searches probably require the payment of fees, some as low as \$15. Extending to mental health professionals and support staff the same kinds of protections that are available to public defenders, parole agents and those at similar at risk would enhance the safety and security of those who serve the mental health community.

Issue: Medicaid reimbursements exclude psychiatric patients age 18 to 65 if they are receiving care at a freestanding Acute Psychiatric Inpatient Hospital with 16 beds or more. The restriction reduces the bed space available for Medicaid patients throughout the region.

Action: Support or sponsor legislation to remove the Medicaid exclusion for psychiatric patients between the ages of 18-65 in freestanding acute psychiatric inpatient hospitals with more than 16 beds. Such legislation will eliminate discrimination against a protected group of disabled mentally ill adults.

Background: The Federal Government decided Medicaid was never intended for the chronically mentally ill adult patients in state hospitals. When states moved patients from State Hospitals to the community, federal legislation was passed to extend the Medicaid exclusion rule to long-term institutions for mental disorders. Thus, if County Mental Health Departments want to provide inpatient services for adult patients at freestanding psychiatric hospitals, they must incur the costs of services. The Medicaid exclusion rule was never meant to include freestanding Acute Psychiatric Inpatient Hospitals with more than 16 beds.

Cost Neutral: There should be no increase in costs to State/Federal/County Governments. These Medicaid patients continue to receive treatment in psychiatric hospitals that often are far from their homes. There might be a reduction in cost if ambulance transports are reduced.

Issue: The State Administration shifts State costs to counties by reinterpreting Realignment legislation from 1994, adding to county obligations the costs of services that were never included in Realignment.

Action: Support or sponsor legislation that protects counties from added obligations that were not included in the original Realignment legislation.

Background: Legislation referred to as Realignment in 1994 shifted State funded programs to the counties along with funding sources arranged inside the legislation.

Issue: The primary funding sources for County Mental Health programs are Realignment, Prop 63 Initiative and Medi-Cal. All these sources are in severe and abrupt decline. They all retain their original regulations which are categorized into specific clients and types of programs. For example, most regulations bar their use for any care requiring involuntary detention or requiring a locked environment. These restrictions then leave the expense to the counties.

Action: The county should support any legislation relaxing or eliminating categorical funding in Prop 63 Initiative or Realignment programs.

Background: Over the past 20 years, the county has assumed more and more responsibility for mental health, drug and alcohol programs, while at the same time, has lost freedom to plan for local programs without restrictions on the use of funds.

Issue: State reimbursement for special elections called by the Governor. The upcoming Special Primary and Special General elections to fill the 37th State Senate vacancy may cost up to \$2.6 million (\$1.1 to \$1.3 million per election). In addition, the May 19, 2009 Special Election cost the county \$1.8 million. The state does not reimburse counties for elections called by the Governor.

Action: Support.

Background: The state previously reimbursed counties (from 1993 to 2007) for the costs of special elections held to fill vacancies in the Assembly, Senate and Congress. They did so in recognition that it is difficult for counties to afford the unanticipated expense of conducting special vacancy elections. The law provided for a reimbursement sunset on January 1, 2008 (AB 119, 2007 – Price).

The Governor acknowledged when signing SB 19, calling the May 19 Special Election, that special elections do not come without costs to California counties and promised he would work with the Legislature to see that counties were reimbursed as soon as possible. Legislation to reimburse counties has not been introduced and counties have not recovered the expense of the Special Election.

Proposal: Amend Elections Code §13001 to include expenses incurred for elections proclaimed by the Governor to fill a vacancy in the office of State Senator or Member of the Assembly, or to fill a vacancy in the office the United States Senator or Representative in Congress, or to conduct a special statewide election to place statewide measures before the voters, are to be paid by the state.

Prior Legislation:

- AB 37 (Johnson), Chapter 39, Statutes of 1993
- AB 1709 (McPherson), Chapter 1102, Statutes of 1996
- AB 547 (Longville), Chapter 790, Statutes of 1999
- AB 783 (Jones), Chapter 714, Statutes of 2005
- AB 1799 (McCarthy) Chapter 727, Statutes of 2006
- AB 119 (Price) Chapter 487, Statutes of 2007

Issue: Mail ballot elections at county discretion for local elections.

The Uniform District Election Law (UDEL) elections held in November of odd-years have low voter turnout, especially when state measures are not on the ballot. UDEL elections cost the county between \$1.5 and \$2.1 million to conduct. Since 2001, 25 of the county's jurisdictions have moved their regular election date to the even-year November to increase voter participation. Of the 30 jurisdictions scheduled for the November 2009 ballot, 14 had insufficient nominees to go to election.

Proposal: Add a provision(s) to the Elections Code that would allow UDEL elections, not consolidated with statewide measures, to be conducted by all mailed ballots at the county's discretion. All mail ballot elections are estimated to reduce UDEL election costs by 30 percent.

Position: Sponsor as a pilot program or support.

Background: Voting by mail continues to increase. In odd year elections, the percentage of vote by mail voters exceeds voters who cast their ballot in person at the polls (see table).

November	Election Turnout	Ballots cast at Polls	Ballots cast by Mail
2001	21.52%	63.0%	37.0%
2003	18.11%	50.5%	49.5%
2005*	44.4%	41.0%	59.0%
2007	23.0%	44.4%	55.6%
2009	19.0%	30.0%	70.0%

* 8 statewide measures were on the ballot

In November 2009, polling place turnout averaged 77 voters per poll or 6 voters per hour.

Mail ballot elections reduce costs by eliminating the need to recruit polling places and poll workers, poll worker training, and precinct supplies.

Prior Legislation:

- Assembly Bill 1228 (Yamada), Vetoed 2009
- Assembly Bill 1654 (Huffman) 2007-08, Amended to deal with unrelated issue
- Assembly Bill 867 (Liu) 2005-06, Held in Appropriations on Suspense
- Assembly Bill 319 (Salinas), Chapter 385, Statutes of 2001

Issue: Introduce legislation that would permit the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and County Sheriffs to contract with county Veterans Service Officers to provide claims assistance and other relevant services to incarcerated veterans.

Action: Establishing Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) benefits eligibility and entitlement to incarcerated veterans will help provide eligible veterans access to services and monetary benefits immediately upon release from incarceration, rather than waiting for up to 12 months for the VA benefits process to be completed subsequent to release. This will result in earlier access to VA medical care and treatment, reducing the burden on local and state programs.

Background: Establishing entitlement to VA disability benefits will generate income to veterans in a matter of weeks, rather than months or years. Access to a secure income stream could have a positive effect on the rate of recidivism for disabled veterans. In addition, there is potential for apportionment of disability benefits to veterans' dependent families during a veteran's incarceration providing a means of reducing the burden on public assistance programs.

Issue: Health Realignment Program not keeping up with county population growth.

Proposal: Support or sponsor legislation that takes population growth into account for health realignment funding formulas.

Background: Realignment of health funding in 1991 aimed to provide a steady stream of growth by funding it through sales tax and vehicle license fees, two revenue sources that usually have annual growth. However, growth in health and mental health realignment is, in fact, not occurring to any significant degree, and is not keeping up with either inflation or population. Due to the realignment formulas, Riverside County is receiving almost the same amount of funding now as in 2003, despite significant increases in population, and in sales tax and VLF. The system is not working as intended. Annual growth for funding is very small and Riverside County is estimated to be losing several million dollars as a result. This is a cost shift to counties from the state.

Issue: Equity in Health Realignment.

Proposal: Support or sponsor legislation to provide for equitable distribution of health realignment funding to account for population size.

Background: Riverside County receives a disproportionate amount of funding relative to its population size. Funding formulas have not been adjusted since 1991 to ensure equity in population size and demand for services. Health realignment funding should adjust for changes in demographics. Counties experiencing population growth should receive an equitable share of the health realignment fund. This issue is different than the proposal to provide increased funding to account for growth in that it asks that the pot of money also be distributed to equitably reflect county populations.



Selected Existing State Legislative Policy Positions

Selected Existing State Legislative Policy Positions

Public Library:

Support measures that fully restore the Transaction Based Reimbursement to the county for lending library materials to other jurisdictions. Fully fund the Public Library Fund, which provides general state support to public libraries.

Sex Offenders:

Support measures to restrict the residence of sex offenders who are 290 registrants as permitted by Jessica's Law.

Water:

Continue to support measures to mitigate the impacts of the water shortage as effectively as possible. Advocate for state water delivery projects and funding mechanisms that will improve water related infrastructure and delivery methods without causing delivery delays or jeopardizing existing water supplies.

Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA):

Support efforts to reform the RHNA process to more fairly and accurately distribute low and ultra-low income housing opportunities throughout Southern California. Support measures to create consistency regarding the allocation of tax credits to the forecast in the RHNA to provide for more additional development of affordable housing in Riverside County.

Design Build:

Support the extension authority and lower the threshold for its use and application.

Juvenile Justice:

Continue to oppose any realignment of the juvenile justice system without attendant state funding.



Urban Counties Caucus Priorities

Urban Counties Caucus Priorities

State Budget Issues:

UCC will focus on the state budget with emphasis on securing adequate funding for programs administered by counties. UCC will oppose reductions in state programs that will have the effect of increasing the burden on county programs. UCC will oppose efforts to reduce funding without a commensurate reduction in county responsibility. UCC will further oppose any efforts to shift costs or federal penalties to counties.

The State Budget is in a serious deficit situation again, and it is worth noting that the last budget cycle had serious implications to counties including:

- Suspension of Proposition 1A.
- Deferrals of payments to counties.
- Cuts to transportation and Proposition 42.
- Borrowing funds from redevelopment.
- Significant cuts to health and human services including IHSS, child welfare, Medi-Cal, and foster care.

On top of the recent budget cuts, UCC also notes that historically the state has raided county revenue since the enactment of ERAF which contributes to the overall difficulty of financing services at the local level. The shortfall between actual county expenses and state reimbursement for state programs has grown to over \$1 billion annually since 2001, creating a de facto cost shift (i.e. the Human Services Funding Deficit). This funding gap forces counties to reduce services to vulnerable populations and/or divert scarce county resources from other critical local services. It also increases the risk of state and federal penalties.

With that in mind, UCC believes that the Budget must not be balanced with cuts alone. Further, closing the budget shortfall with additional borrowing simply delays resolution of the problem. The continuing structural deficits requires reform of California's system of state-local finance so that both Boards of Supervisors and the Legislature have the tools necessary to provide the services and facilities necessary to meet the expectations and needs of our citizens.

Health Care Financing: UCC will work to ensure that the upcoming 2010 Medi-Cal waiver maximizes the drawdown of federal funds for services and facilities and ensures that urban counties receive their fair share of funding. UCC will also closely monitor the efforts by the Department of Health Care Services to obtain the necessary funding to deal with the 2009-10 budget gap in the Medi-Cal program.

Corrections: UCC will work to improve communication and coordination between the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and the urban counties related to parole reform and public safety issues. UCC will support changes to the funding structure that will allow for local government flexibility to ensure that counties remain partners with the state on reentry programs, which will help to provide a smooth transition of parolees to their communities.



Urban Counties Caucus Budget Principles

Urban Counties Caucus Budget Principles

- UCC will oppose cuts to counties. This includes cost shifts, direct cuts, deferrals, or elimination of funding (i.e. state or federal).
- UCC will oppose cuts that result in counties receiving a disproportionate share of the cuts to local governments. Instead, the state should consider changing formulas or other proposals that will mitigate the total impact on counties.
- UCC will oppose any new mandates on counties. This includes new legislation that will have significant costs for counties, pending regulations that will have a fiscal impact on counties, or failure of the state to reimburse counties for providing services (i.e. election reimbursement).
- UCC supports efforts to seek mitigation to cuts or cost shifts through a balanced statewide approach of additional revenues or borrowing. This could include additional fees, or revenues, reducing some program requirements, or suspending programs for a limited amount of time as long as this does not result in an increase in county requirements (i.e. Section 17000).
- UCC supports realigning some programs to counties as long as these are accompanied with adequate and reliable on-going funding sources. UCC also supports performance standards to provide additional flexibility in our administration of mandated health, human services and improve efficiencies in other programs.
- UCC supports the streamlining of state government including consolidations and eliminations of some boards, commissions and departments in order to provide funding to critical health and safety programs.



Urban Counties Caucus Legislative Policies

Urban Counties Caucus Legislative Policies

Governance and Finance: In order to fulfill the dual roles of agent of the state and local service provider, counties must have adequate authority, flexibility, and resources. Most importantly, counties must have stable sources of revenue that enable them to both implement state law and respond to essential local priorities.

UCC will oppose proposals that preempt county authority.

UCC will support legislation that enhances or maintains a county's revenue base and oppose measures that limit a county's revenue raising authority or reduce a county's revenue from any source without a commensurate reduction in responsibility.

UCC will oppose proposed formulas that discriminate against urban areas, such as by providing a high minimum funding floor to low population states and localities and not taking into account the higher cost of living, land costs, and risk factors in urban areas.

UCC will support the return to counties of property taxes that were transferred to schools and will also support measures that would enhance counties' efforts to administer the property tax system and oppose those that increase counties' unfunded responsibility for the system.

UCC will oppose any proposals that continue or increase county responsibilities or expenses without a viable and adequate source of revenue.

UCC will oppose any legislation that requires a new program, higher level of service, expanded employee benefits, or other cost imposed upon counties by the state without adequate ongoing funding. Further, UCC believes that counties should be reimbursed promptly and by a date certain for mandates imposed by the state. Finally, because suspended mandates create liability and fiscal issues for counties, mandates should be repealed, not suspended.

UCC will support measures that provide funding for local infrastructure.

UCC will support proposals that increase a board's ability to raise local revenues.

UCC will support measures that maximize federal revenues.

UCC will support measures that reduce maintenance of effort or participation fee requirements and will oppose measures that impose additional maintenance of effort requirements on counties unless they are at least revenue neutral.