

# BUDGET IMPACT ON SENIORS

Regional Perspective: **Kern County**, November 2017

## PROPOSED CUTS

Trump's budget plan proposed **\$6 BILLION cuts to housing**. Federal rental housing assistance helps more than 450,000 California households — 43 percent of which are headed by an adult age 62 or older.

The House, Senate and Trump budget plans called for **cuts of up to \$800 billion - \$1 trillion to Medicaid**, which pays for health care and nursing homes. 6 out of 10 nursing home residents rely on Medicaid.

The Trump budget plan proposed **slashing \$4.2 billion in grants to states for energy assistance**. California receives \$176 million from the Department of Energy and the Department of Health and Human Services to help seniors.

The Trump budget plan proposed **eliminating the Senior Community Service Employment Program**, which provides job training to low-income job seekers ages 55 and older and pays them for up to 20 hours of work, allowing them to supplement their income.

The House budget plan **cuts SNAP by at least \$140 billion** over the decade, reaching 40 percent in 2027.

Overall, Trump's budget plan proposed **eliminating the Legal Services budget**. The American Bar Association programs help 1.9 million people annually.

For 2018, Trump wants to reduce FEMA's state and local program grants by **\$600 MILLION dollars**.



## IMPACT ON SENIORS

**Proposed cuts to Kern county are \$18 MILLION.** In the county, 9,000 senior-headed households pay more than half their income for housing costs. At least 1,390 households with a person 60 and over could lose federal housing assistance.

**In Kern County, 207,074 people 19-64 are enrolled in Medi-Cal.** Kern County is 6th for greatest percent of Medi-Cal enrollees in California. Those ages 55-64 are particularly vulnerable, not old enough for Medicare, and more likely to have greater health needs than younger working adults.

Seniors get help paying for high utility bills, replacing broken air-conditioners, and keeping the power on. In Kern County, **up to 2,235 seniors 60 years of age and older and their families could lose this vital support.**

**The unemployment rate in Kern County is twice the state average**, between 8% and 11% in 2017. SCSEP offers employment opportunities for low-income older Americans while providing staff to local programs. 2/3 of older Americans participating in SCSEP are women and almost a third are 65 years or older.

**162,700 people (18%) in Kern county could lose SNAP to help pay for food.** Kern County is in C.D. 23, where 19% of households using SNAP have a senior. The county could lose up to **\$467 MILLION in support** for the local Kern County economy.

Seniors are at risk of losing essential support to secure housing for veterans, protect them from scams and domestic violence, access health benefits, and survive during disasters.

**FEMA and Emergency Food Aid offer funds to help seniors during disasters** like fires, earthquakes, and floods. In Kern County, many people were helped during the 2014 Way Fire.

# BUDGET UPDATE

In spring, 2017 the Trump administration released a proposed budget for fiscal year (FY) 2018. The U.S House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate released similar budget plans shortly thereafter, and in October Congress passed a final budget for FY 2018 which proposes **\$5.8 trillion in spending cuts and establishes the framework for trillions in tax cuts that mostly go to the richest 1% and wealthy corporations.**

Like the Trump Budget, the GOP Congressional budget would slash programs that create jobs and help everyday Americans maintain decent living standards—all to pay for a wasteful border wall, a deportation force, and tax giveaways for the wealthy and corporations.

For example, the Trump budget would cut SNAP by at least \$140 billion over the decade, while the final budget resolution cuts the budget area that funds SNAP but provides fewer specifics. **As a result, in these fact sheets we use the details from the Trump budget plan in many places to show the potential and probable impacts.**

Even though the budget resolution numbers are not binding, the FY 2018 federal budget matters. It offers a framework for Trump and the GOP Congress' tax and spending priorities and includes language known as a "reconciliation directive." This reconciliation language is required to set up a process for Republicans to pass legislation that cuts taxes for the wealthy and corporations at the expense of programs that matter for seniors—all without a single Democratic vote. If the tax cuts are approved, then it is likely that the cuts to public programs forecast in the Trump and GOP Congress's budgets will be moved quickly through legislation next year.



**For more information on sources contact Sarah Zimmerman at SEIU California: [szimmerman@seiucal.org](mailto:szimmerman@seiucal.org)**

# STORIES



When I moved to San Mateo County in 1968, I very quickly knew this was the place I wanted to raise my two daughters and do business. I've always done well for myself; I got into the insurance business 40 years ago after having served our country in the military, and have been a homeowner in San Mateo. As a renter now in my retirement, I would never have imagined that one day I would be slapped with a \$1,100 rent increase and then given a 60-day eviction notice.

**– Rodger Benard, Veteran**



Lack of affordable homes also has made substandard housing issues more prevalent in Central Valley communities....Substandard housing can include cockroach infestations, failed plumbing systems and exposed electrical wiring. Broken air conditioning is another common problem in the Central Valley, that when landlords fail to fix these units it can be life threatening for tenants living in areas where temperatures can rise above 110 degrees.



Peter [not his real name] had gone for months without his medicine to control high blood pressure. He stopped leaving his home because he was running dangerously low on catheters he uses with his wheelchair. He was afraid of having an accident in public. Why? Because of a Medi-Cal backlog, the county erroneously sent letters to some people discontinuing their Medi-Cal eligibility. He's paraplegic, and Medi-Cal has been paying for his doctor's visits and medicines for decades. But in July his doctors told him that he was no longer covered by the program. He began calling county and state Medi-Cal offices, but was unable to figure out what happened. He filled out another renewal packet and mailed it to the county but his coverage still wasn't reinstated. In September he contacted Neighborhood Legal Services (NLSLA), whose lawyers filed a complaint with the county. His Medi-Cal was reinstated within a few days.