

## SEARAC California E-Digest

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June 2009

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##### **I. News**

##### **APEN Wins Chevron Court Case**

On June 5, 2009, Contra Costa County Superior Court Judge Barbara Zuniga tossed out the flawed Environmental Impact Report for the planned Richmond Chevron Refinery expansion. The Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN) was instrumental in organizing community leaders through its Laotian Organizing Project in the Richmond area to combat the environmental impacts of industrial development on neighborhoods and communities in the East Bay. If you would like to learn more about APEN or this event, go to APEN's website at <http://www.apen4ej.org> or the APENblogger at <http://www.apen4ej.org/blog/>.

##### **Sacramento Iu Mien Leader Jimmy Phanh Dies**

Jimmy Phanh, a well known and respected leader Iu Mien community leader in Sacramento, passed away on June 10<sup>th</sup>. As a community advocate, he supported the founding of United Iu Mien Community Inc. and the annual Iu-Mien Student Conference. In his life he served as a translator in the Ban Vinai camps, a job developer, and an organic farming advocate. He also hosted a well known community radio show. For the Sacramento Bee news article, please go to [http://www.sacbee.com/latest/story/1942196.html?mi\\_rss=Latest%20News](http://www.sacbee.com/latest/story/1942196.html?mi_rss=Latest%20News).

## **II. Policy Updates**

### **2009-2010 California Budget Proposal Summary**

The proposed cuts to the 2009 California budget largely affect those who are the most vulnerable in our community: children, elderly, persons with disabilities and the poor. Significant populations of Southeast Asian families are recipients of the social service programs that might be eliminated. Large cuts are being made on services providing the bare necessities to families, and as a result, the same groups of people are being affected numerous times. For example, a disabled low-income lawfully residing immigrant parent may lose both cash and food assistance through CAPI and CFAP, as well as medical benefits through Medi-Cal if all the cuts are passed. Below are descriptions of some of the cuts proposed in the California Budget.

For more information on the pending 2009-2010 California Budget and ways to get involved with this issue please access <http://www.ebudget.ca.gov/> or contact Azizah Ahmad, SEARAC's California Policy Advocate, at [azizah@searac.org](mailto:azizah@searac.org) or (916) 428-7444.

### **California Food Assistance Program (CFAP)**

Over 23,000 people will be affected by the Governor's elimination of the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) if the program is cut. Currently, CFAP provides assistance to lawfully residing low-income immigrant adults living in the US for less than five years. CFAP provides state funded food stamps to immigrants ineligible for federal food stamps. Many of the recipients are victims of domestic violence, human trafficking and/or are recent immigrants who are under the legal support of their sponsors.

### **Cal Grant**

The proposed elimination of Cal Grant could cut approximately 118,000 new grants for college freshmen in the 2009-2010 school year.<sup>1</sup> Cal Grant is a state funded financial aid for low to moderate income students.

Many Southeast Asian students in California are dependent on Cal Grant to help fund college expenses. Cal Grant awards up to \$9,700 to individual students per year, depending on financial need and the type of institution students attend to help pay for tuition costs, living expenses, etc. Without Cal Grant, low income students will have to find other ways to pay for college and for some, the elimination of the grant may become a deciding factor in pursuing higher education.

### **California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKS)**

The elimination of CalWORKS will make California the only state in the nation to cut this welfare-to-work program. Approximately 25% of Californians on welfare are enrolled in this program, which amounts to 1.2 million people, and of those, 900,000 are children.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-calgrants29-2009may29,0,694495.story>

Approximately 21,000 Southeast Asian families are enrolled in the CalWORKS program.<sup>2</sup> The elimination of the CalWORKS program will leave many of these Southeast Asian families without the services to provide for their basic needs.

### **Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI)**

The Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) provides assistance to approximately 10,500 Asian immigrant seniors and persons with disabilities who are ineligible for federal Supplementary Security Income. CAPI could also be eliminated by Governor Schwarzenegger's budget proposal.<sup>3</sup>

Most of the recipients of CAPI are elderly Southeast Asian women.<sup>4</sup> For many recipients, this may be their only source of income and the elimination of CAPI will be detrimental and would force many families into greater poverty.

### **Education**

The Governor's budget proposal will cut an additional \$1.3 billion from education in the current school year and \$4 billion for the upcoming school year. The cuts will result in teacher lay-offs, elimination of summer school, sports and music programs, and increased class sizes.<sup>5</sup>

Nearly 66,690 Southeast Asian English Learners will be affected by the education cutbacks.<sup>6</sup>

### **Healthy Families**

The Governor proposed to cut the Healthy Families Program which provides nearly a million low-income children with health coverage. The elimination of the Healthy Families Program would make California the only state in the country to deny health coverage to low-income children.

Should these budget cuts take place, nearly 4,000 Southeast Asian families enrolled in the Healthy Families program will be cut off from health care.<sup>7</sup>

### **Medi-Cal**

**Limited Scope Medi-Cal Benefits for Legal Immigrants:** Approximately 82,000 lawfully residing immigrants who have lived in the US for fewer than five years will lose their full Medi-Cal coverage, and will only have access to emergency services.

**Medi-Cal Eligibility:** Less people will be eligible for Medi-Cal as the Governor plans to cut \$750 million to the program. This proposed cut will deny about 978,500 people health coverage.

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<sup>2</sup> California Department of Social Services, *Federal Fiscal Year 2003 CalWORKS Characteristics Survey*

<sup>3</sup> Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum, *Health and Human Services Cuts in the 2009-10 Budget* (Handed out at the 2009 APIA California Policy Summit)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.wclp.org/Resources/WCLPContent/tabid/1088/smid/3613/ArticleID/244/Default.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> [www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr09/yr09rel86.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr09/yr09rel86.asp)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> California Department of Health and Human Services Report, *Healthy Families September 2006 Report*

Over 500,000 APIs are enrolled in Medi-Cal<sup>8</sup>, with approximately 200,000 of that number being Southeast Asian.<sup>9</sup>

### **Supplementary Security Income (SSI)/ State Supplementary Payment**

SSI/SSP grants provide cash assistance to low-income seniors and persons with disabilities. The Governor's budget proposal will reduce grants to the federal minimum level of \$830/month a person and \$1047/month for couples.

Southeast Asian elders in California have high disability rates. The percentages range from a high of 72.6% for elderly Hmong women to a low of 53.6% for elderly Vietnamese men, a rate that is still significantly higher than California's overall percentage of 42.2.<sup>10</sup> Most Southeast Asian elders and persons with disabilities depend on SSI and SSP programs for income to support their basic needs.

### **III. Upcoming Events**

#### **Opening Doors, Inc. Sacramento's World Refugee Day Celebration**

Opening Doors, Inc. Sacramento will be hosting its World Refugee Day celebration at 6 p.m. Thursday, June 18, at Bethany Presbyterian Church, 5625 - 24th Street, Sacramento. It will be a multi-cultural buffet dinner and award ceremony. This year the recipient of the UNHCR Award will be Mr. Robert Khang, the first Hmong refugee to resettle in Sacramento. Since his arrival almost 30 years ago, he has been actively involved in helping hundreds of other refugees, and others successfully resettle in the United States. If you have any questions about the event please contact Maurine Huang at (916) 492-2591.

#### **Iu Mien Scholarship Fund hosts 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Scholarship Event**

The Iu Mien Scholarship Fund will host its 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Scholarship Event to honor scholarship recipients at 6pm on June 19, 2009, at the Jack London Aquatic Center, 115 Embarcadero, Oakland, CA 94606. The event will include a keynote speaker, traditional performances, and raffle prizes of Iu Mien arts and crafts. For more information, contact Michelle Chao at (510) 882-9943.

#### **Asian Resources' 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Fortune Festival**

Asian Resources will be hosting its 5th Annual Fortune Festival: A Celebration of Culture & Commerce & Community Health and Safety Fair on Saturday, June 20, 10 am-4 pm at the Fruitridge Shopping Center parking lot, 5709 Stockton Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95824. For more information, please contact Asian Resources at (916) 454-1892.

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<sup>8</sup> Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum, *Health and Human Services Cuts in the 2009-10 Budget* (Handed out at the 2009 APIA California Policy Summit)

<sup>9</sup> California Department of Healthcare Services, *Medi-Cal January 2007 Report*

<sup>10</sup> SEARAC. Southeast Asian American Elders in California: Demographics and Service Priorities Revealed by the 200 Census and a Survey of Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs) and Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs). 2003. pp 14.

## **Vietnamese American Community Center of the East Bay's Vietnamese American Family Celebration Festival**

VACCEB's Vietnamese American Family Celebration Festival will be held on June 20, 2009 in Oakland. The free event will have seniors and young children performing, traditional dances, exhibits, a scholarship award ceremony, and food. For more information, please contact Diep Doan at [ddoan732@gmail.com](mailto:ddoan732@gmail.com).

## **SEARAC's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala: "Beyond the Mekong: Celebrating 30 Years of Service within the Southeast Asian Community"**

SEARAC will be hosting its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala in the Green Room of the San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center on September 26, 2009. The evening's festivities will include a VIP reception, a full dinner, exciting speakers, an awards ceremony, and cultural entertainment. The awards ceremony will pay tribute to outstanding individuals and organizations that have empowered and created positive change for the Southeast Asian American community. Information and tickets are available at [www.searac.org/searac-30anniversary.html](http://www.searac.org/searac-30anniversary.html).

## **IV. Grants and Scholarship Opportunities**

### **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, Strengthening Communities Fund, Nonprofit Capacity Building Program RFP**

The Administration for Children and Families is currently accepting applications for federal grants from community and faith based organizations under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, Strengthening Communities Fund, Nonprofit Capacity Building Program. The 34 grantees will be awarded 1 million dollars in a 24 month period to develop the capacity of the organization. Applicant organizations will be required to match 20% of the total approved cost of the project. The deadline is July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009. For more information please go to <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/HHS-2009-ACF-OCS-SI-0091.html>

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For more information, contact SEARAC's California office:

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