

COMMONWEAL

The Juvenile Justice Program

June 15, 2011

CALIFORNIA BUDGET UPDATE

- ☑ *Democrats push majority vote budget to meet today's constitutional deadline.*
- ☑ *Failing to get Republican support for a ballot measure on tax extensions, Democrats now propose to handle the remaining \$10 billion deficit with deferrals of education spending, more cuts to higher education and courts and other adjustments.*
- ☑ *Realignment plans are pulled back in the Democratic proposal. Further DJJ realignment comes off the table for FY 11-12. Local public safety grants—including JJCPA, JPCF and COPS—are not included for General Fund support in this proposal though Dems are asking Republicans to support a separate 2/3 vote to extend the VLF tax for public safety. Pieces of the adult corrections realignment plan would still go forward.*

Having failed to draw Republican support for a ballot measure on tax extensions, Democrats in the California Legislature are moving aggressively to meet today's budget deadline with a "majority vote only" package of deferrals, cuts and program changes. The new proposal cuts Republicans out of the loop. Up until now, the Governor and Democratic leaders have patiently listened to Republican demands on pension reform, spending caps and relaxation of environmental laws, put on the table as pre-requisites for the Republican votes needed to get a tax extension measure before the state's voters in the Fall. That tax measure would have supplied nearly \$6 billion in dedicated revenue for the realignment of major state programs including adult and youth corrections, foster care, mental health and other departments.

But with the June 15th deadline, and lawmakers facing loss of pay for failure to act, Democrats have now gone out front with their own plan to adopt a majority-vote budget. According to recently published polls, voter support for the tax extensions is waning, with a only a slim majority now favoring tax extensions to support the realignment package. Feeling the pinch of dimming prospects for voter approval of taxes and Republican demands that exceed their tolerance levels, Democrats are prepared to adopt their own, on-time budget without Republican votes.

Juvenile Justice Programs Lose Ground in this Deal

State funded juvenile justice programs would take a massive hit under current Democratic, majority-vote proposal. Support for local public safety grants, including the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) and Juvenile Probation Camp Fund (JPCF), would terminate July 1 with the sunset of the VLF supplemental tax that now sustains them—unless Republicans agree to a separate (2/3) vote to extend the supplemental public safety tax. No General Fund dollars would be allocated to pick up JJCPA, JPCF, COPS or the other local public safety grants hitched to VLF.

Moreover, the proposed "final" realignment of the Division of Juvenile Justice will be pulled back for FY 11-12. In fact, earlier this week the Administration took DJJ realignment out of their larger realignment package, for reasons that were not made entirely clear. This would leave DJJ as a state-run, General Fund operation—minus one more institution (CDCR has announced the closure of the Southern California Reception Center in Norwalk, dropping the DJJ network to just three including Ventura, OH Close and Chad). The status of SB 81 (Youthful Offender Block Grant) funding is not known at the present—but presumably, this (along with AB 1628 youth parole funding) would be sustained as a General Fund expense in the Democratic budget now up for vote. Budget proposals and positions are changing hourly on this Capitol battlefield. We report only what is known so far-- subject to revision based on quickly turning events.