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# Assembly California Legislature



REGINALD BYRON JONES-SAWYER, SR.  
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, FIFTY-NINTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEES  
CHAIR: PUBLIC SAFETY  
AGRICULTURE  
BUDGET  
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION  
LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT  
SUBCOMMITTEE  
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 5 ON  
PUBLIC SAFETY

May 26, 2020

Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

Thank you for your continued work in providing relief for Californians throughout this pandemic by establishing a fund for undocumented individuals. However, low-income individuals throughout California, including in my district, were already vulnerable to health and economic disparities before COVID-19 and will face more hardships as we recover from this crisis.

Recent reports highlight how COVID-19 has exposed socio-economic disparities within our system. New data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has shown that underlying health issues that are more prevalent among low-income individuals, such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease make individuals more at risk during this pandemic. COVID-19 has exposed this in real time, as a recent LA Times report noted that the virus is killing young Latinos and African Americans at a disproportionate rates because we have not done enough to support their health outcomes pre-pandemic.

As such, I want to propose a stimulus package specifically targeted to South Los Angeles and similar communities statewide. This package should be multifaceted and address the health, education, and career outcomes of some of California's most vulnerable citizens.

Clinics serve one-third of Medi-Cal recipients in the state, and one in six Californians, but have not received nearly the amount of relief that they need. Residents in South Los Angeles rely on clinics for treatment and routine check-ups, in addition to dental service; however, because of a low number of patients during this pandemic and low re-imburement rates, clinics are struggling to keep their doors open and serve the communities that need the most care. Your executive order relaxing some of the privacy provisions surrounding tele-health has allowed clinics to continue serving many Latinos and African Americans suffering from pre-existing conditions, like diabetes and heart disease, but more must be done to make sure that disadvantaged communities receive the care

they deserve. The state should explore ways to provide aid to clinics that does not leave them in a worse position due to your planned \$1.2 billion reduction of Proposition 56 funds.

These healthcare issues are only exacerbated by the economic turmoil many families are facing. A USC Dornsife Center study found that in Los Angeles County alone, only 45% of residents are still employed, and a Budget and Policy Center "Fact Sheet" found that the workers most likely to be impacted are low-wage workers in the service industry. This is why although the \$500 stimulus for undocumented workers was helpful and appreciated, it falls short both of what is needed and the \$1200 provided to legal residents by the federal government. I am deeply concerned that we are asking our most vulnerable communities to withstand the worst of this economic burden without providing them the support they need. I want to work with your administration to provide another stimulus for undocumented workers, at minimum doubling the existing \$500 per worker with another \$125 million investment in working families. The removal of the prohibition on immigrant filers receiving the California Earned Income Tax Credit would go a long way in providing essential support to these families. Recent reports show that this would only cost the state an estimated \$65 million a year but would make a dramatic impact on the financial health of 600,000 Californians including 200,000 children.

We must also provide communities the ability to help themselves. To that end, I would like to work with you to support local community banks in providing emergency bridge loans and other financial assistance to small businesses in their community. These banks have the expertise and knowledge of their community that is necessary to jumpstart the backbone of the California economy, small businesses.

Additionally, as the member with the most number of LAUSD schools within his district, all in South Los Angeles, I am concerned that if we do not provide our students with the tools they need to succeed, this two-tier system of health and economic outcomes will persist. In fact, a recent USC Annenberg School study found that households lacking the resources their kids needed to continue their education were predominantly clustered in South and East Los Angeles. We cannot expect our children to come out of this crisis with skills they need, if we do not provide them with the tools to succeed. This stimulus package must include funds supporting school operation going forward, doing all we can to ensure that the existing achievement gap does not further expand.

Finally, as the economic fallout of the pandemic continues to be felt by families for years into the future, we must work to provide pathways into high-quality jobs. We must remain committed to, and even build on, our funds to support career technical education (CTE) programs in our schools and apprenticeship programs throughout the community. We should increase the CTE funds provided to community colleges to ensure that the local labor force has the skills demanded

by the available jobs. This program should be doubled with another investment of approximately \$300 million ongoing by the state to support pathways into good-paying jobs, helping families avoid increased debt pressure.

I am truly grateful for the work you have done thus far during this crisis, but more must be done. This crisis has impacted different communities in differing ways. I remain extremely concerned for the future of low-income, urban districts, like my own, that already faced a number of challenges before the onset of COVID-19. I respectfully ask for an economic stimulus targeted at communities like my district. This stimulus package is not cheap, but I am fearful that if we do not provide low-income Californians in South Los Angeles with a targeted economic stimulus, then we will have a forgotten generation which is an altogether far more expensive proposition. We must meet this crisis head on, in the moment, by providing communities with the economic and systemic relief they have needed since even before this pandemic.

I look forward to working with you to develop and implement this program. With your help, we can drastically improve the health, education, and career outcomes for millions of Californians and rebound from this pandemic stronger than ever.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer, Sr." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial 'R'.

Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer, Sr.  
Assemblymember, 59<sup>th</sup> Assembly District