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# REPORT

Thomas Walters & Associates, Inc.



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TO: Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

DATE: January 8, 2021

FROM: Don Gilchrest

The pandemic emergency severely disrupted the legislative process in 2020 and dramatically intensified the County's federal advocacy program. Despite a very divisive and partisan atmosphere, Congress and the Trump Administration came together to enact five major COVID-19 relief bills that included numerous provisions for public health response, fiscal relief to states and local governments, and aid to businesses and individuals impacted by the economic downturn. In addition to pandemic relief, several other legislative accomplishments of significance to your Board and the County's mandated responsibilities in 2020 were enacted, including the twelve appropriations bills that fund the federal government.

Throughout the year, we worked closely with CEO Miyasato and County staff to support your Board's response to the public health emergency and efforts to obtain federal assistance for County operations during a period of severe hardship. We remained in constant contact with the County because of the chaotic and rapidly changing advocacy environment. We also worked closely with NACo, CSAC, and other local government representatives. Our House and Senate delegation provided crucial support for the County's efforts and we were in regular contact with the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and federal agencies.

An overview of major outcomes includes:

- \$46 million to the County of Santa Barbara through the CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund,
- Estimated \$13 million to the County of Santa Barbara for rental assistance,
- Assistance for individuals and businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic through direct payments, SBA forgivable loans and enhanced unemployment benefits,
- Three-year reauthorization of mandatory funding for Federally Qualified Health Centers,
- \$1.5 million in emergency supplemental funding for County of Santa Barbara Federally Qualified Health Centers for pandemic response,
- Payments in Lieu of Taxes funding to the County of \$2 million,

- HUD funding to the County of \$5.5 million through programs such as Community Development Block Grants, including \$3 million provided for pandemic response,
- \$2 million in Continuum of Care awards for ongoing projects in the County serving the homeless,
- Legislation to continue the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program,
- Expanded Older Americans Act programs that support social and nutrition services for seniors and their caregivers,
- Increased foster care funding enacted in the *Supporting Foster Youth & Families through the Pandemic Act*,
- One-year reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program, and
- Clean energy incentives included in the year-end omnibus legislation.

The report that follows provides additional details on federal legislation impacting the County of Santa Barbara in 2020.

## Table of Contents

<b>Pandemic Relief</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Agricultural Funding</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Disaster Preparedness and Response</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Wildfire Prevention .....	5
Disaster Programs/Flood Insurance .....	5
Funding for FEMA/Homeland Security .....	6
<b>Environment and Land Use</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Climate Change.....	6
Payments in Lieu of Taxes .....	7
Outer Continental Shelf .....	7
Los Padres Wilderness.....	8
Clean Air.....	8
<b>Health Care Programs</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Federally Qualified Health Centers .....	8
Funding for County Health Care Programs.....	9
Affordable Care Act .....	9
<b>Homelessness, Housing and Community Development</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Immigration Reform</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Public Works and Infrastructure</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Infrastructure/Highway Bill .....	11
Lower Mission Creek .....	12
Lake Cachuma .....	12
<b>Public Safety</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Public Safety Funding.....	13
Immigration Impacts on Public Safety .....	13
Inmate Health Care .....	14
Violence Against Women Act .....	14
Conception Boat Fire.....	14
<b>Social Services</b> .....	<b>15</b>
Nutrition/Food Assistance Programs .....	15
Social Services Funding .....	15
Adult Services and Elder Abuse .....	16
TANF Reauthorization .....	16
<b>Tax Credits for Paid Leave</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Census</b> .....	<b>17</b>

## **Pandemic Relief**

Congress and the Trump Administration came together to enact five major COVID-19 relief bills in 2020 that included numerous provisions for public health response, fiscal relief to states and local governments, and aid to businesses and individuals impacted by the economic downturn. Throughout this process, we worked in coordination with CEO Miyasato and County staff to advocate for federal assistance to the County in the COVID-19 emergency. Our advocacy on these bills focused on support for the local public health and emergency response and securing fiscal relief for the dramatically increased County operations amid the financial stress imposed by the recession. Beginning with the emergence of the pandemic, Representative Carbajal and Senators Harris and Feinstein worked proactively to support the County's priorities by cosponsoring numerous relief bills and sending letters to the House and Senate leadership.

H.R. 748, the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act*, which was signed into law on March 27, provided emergency funding for numerous federal programs of importance to the County, including assistance for housing, nutrition/food banks, federally qualified health centers, and other public health funding. Public assistance funding was also made available through the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Although the CARES Act included \$150 billion for state and local government stabilization through the Coronavirus Relief Fund, local governments under 500,000 in population were excluded from direct allocation of the funds. Eventually, the County received \$46 million from the Coronavirus Relief Fund as a pass-through from the State of California.

As negotiations were underway for a fifth pandemic response bill, we continued to advocate in coordination with the National Association of Counties and other local government representatives for significant flexible funding specifically for local governments be included in light of the burdens of being on the front lines of pandemic response. H.R. 133, the *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act*, which was signed into law in December, included a provision to extend the deadline for CRF expenditures to December 31, 2021. However, disputes between the two parties on funding levels and priorities caused additional local fiscal relief to be dropped from the final legislation. President-elect Biden and congressional Democrats have pledged to revisit this issue early in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress.

H.R. 133 includes \$25 billion for a new Emergency Rental Assistance program, which will provide an estimated \$13 million to the County of Santa Barbara. Supplemental appropriations were also included for several other programs of importance to the County, including \$13 billion for nutrition assistance, \$8.75 billion to the CDC for vaccine distribution, and \$48 billion for assistance through the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund. The legislation also provides significant assistance for businesses and individuals through enhanced unemployment benefits, direct cash payments, and additional Paycheck Protection Program loans to employers.

## **Agricultural Funding**

Following enactment of a five-year Farm Bill in 2018, we have continued to work with our local delegation to support implementation of programs authorized in the legislation, including the highest possible levels of funding for Department of Agriculture programs of importance to the County's agriculture-related responsibilities. The *FY 2021 Agriculture Appropriations Act* was ultimately included in H.R. 133, the *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act*, which was signed into law in December. The legislation includes this funding for programs of importance to the County:

- Pest Detection & Prevention Programs - \$27.7 million (level funding)
- Specialty Crop Pests funding - \$196.5 million (+\$4.5 million)
- Agricultural Quarantine Inspection - \$32.8 million (level funding)
- Food Safety and Inspection - \$1.075 billion (level funding)

## **Disaster Preparedness and Response**

### Wildfire Prevention

We worked in coordination with Senator Feinstein's staff in support of her S. 4431, the *Emergency Wildfire and Public Safety Act*. This legislation proposed additional funding and policy authorizations to help reduce wildfire dangers, including provisions to create more resilient communities and energy grids and to allow FEMA hazard mitigation funding to be used for the installation of fire-resistant wires and infrastructure. Representative Carbajal cosponsored the House companion bill, H.R. 7978. Although the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing on the bill in September, no further action was scheduled on the bill.

### Disaster Programs/Flood Insurance

On October 1, 2020, President Trump signed a short-term Continuing Resolution into law that included a provision that extended the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) authorization through September 30, 2021. A longer-term authorization is needed to provide stability to the program, but disagreements over how to reform the program and keep it on a financially sound footing have prevented Congress from acting. In June, the House Committee on Financial Services approved H.R. 3167, the *National Flood Insurance Program Reauthorization Act* to provide a five-year authorization for the program. However, the Senate did not act on NFIP legislation and the one-year extension for the program was enacted to allow the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress to address these issues.

During the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, the House passed H.R. 3702, the *Reforming Disaster Recovery Act of 2019*, to speed the allocation of Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery grants. H.R. 3702 was introduced by House Financial Services Committee Subcommittee on Oversight Chair Green (D-TX) in response to reports that there have been extensive delays in the allocation of CDBG-DR funds after disasters. The legislation would set deadlines for the allocation of funds by HUD and standardize the regulations for the program in order to simplify administration. The

bill would also set up a process for units of local government to pre-certify as eligible grantees to further expedite the program. H.R. 3702 was referred to the Senate Banking Committee, but no further action was taken on the bill.

#### Funding for FEMA/Homeland Security

In addition to emergency supplemental funding provided through the five pandemic relief packages enacted in 2020, we continued to advocate for the County's disaster preparedness and emergency response priorities in the annual Department of Homeland Security funding measure. The *FY 2021 Homeland Security Appropriations Act* was included in H.R. 133, the *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act*, which was signed into law in December. Funding in the legislation for programs of interest to the County are as follows:

	<b>Final FY20</b>	<b>Trump FY21</b>	<b>Final FY21</b>
<b>Urban Area Security Initiative</b>	\$665 million	\$426 million	\$705 million
<b>State and Local Homeland Security Grants</b>	\$560 million	\$331.9 million	\$610 million
<b>Firefighter Assistance Grants/SAFER</b>	\$710 million	\$688.8 million	\$720 million
<b>Emergency Management Performance Grants</b>	\$355 million	\$279.3 million	\$355 million

### **Environment and Land Use**

#### Climate Change

The House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis released a staff report on climate change in June 2020 that includes comprehensive recommendations designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the United States to zero by 2050. The hundreds of recommendations in the report were referred to various committees in the House that have legislative jurisdiction over the specific issues. House Democratic leaders hope the staff report will help frame the issues for legislative activity in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress.

During 2020, we advocated support for H.R. 4447, the *Clean Economy Jobs and Innovation Act*, in anticipation of the bill's consideration by the House in September. This legislation included numerous provisions to promote the development of clean energy, increase the energy efficiency of buildings, and support carbon capture and greenhouse gas reduction. We noted the County's support for promoting economic stability and environmental protection and stewardship through participation in the growing green economy, support for economic incentives that promote the use of renewable energy, and cost-effective strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote energy conservation.

After H.R. 4447 was passed by the House, there were extensive negotiations to merge it with a similar Senate bill proposed by Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chair Murkowski (R-AK), the *American Energy Innovation Act*. H.R. 133, the *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act*, which was signed into law in December, included as a result of those negotiations provisions that will phase out the use of hydrofluorocarbons, extend solar and wind tax credits, provide energy efficiency tax incentives, and reauthorize EPA's Diesel Emission Reduction Program.

We also advocated for addressing climate change as Congress developed infrastructure legislation. H.R. 2, the *Moving Forward Act*, was passed by the House in July and would have provided substantial funding to respond to these challenges, including tax provisions to support green energy use and programs supporting electric vehicle charging infrastructure and zero-emissions vehicles. H.R. 2 also included Representative Carbajal's H.R. 2470, the *Clean Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Act*, to authorize a program at the Environmental Protection Agency to increase the resiliency of public water works against the threats of natural disasters. The full Senate did not take up H.R. 2 before the end of the 116th Congress, but infrastructure legislation appears to be high on the congressional agenda for 2021.

#### Payments in Lieu of Taxes

The Department of Interior released the FY 2020 Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) amounts last June, and the County received \$1.98 million for its annual allocation, which is slightly more than the previous year. PILT provides funding to counties to offset lost property tax revenue due to the presence of tax-exempt federal lands within their jurisdictions.

We urged the House Natural Resources and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committees to expedite legislation to provide a long-term authorization for PILT. In recent years, Congress has provided funding for the program through annual appropriations bills, but the President's proposal to reduce funding for the program by 14 percent in FY 2021 underscored the danger of exposing PILT to the vagaries of the annual appropriations process.

We also provided our local delegation with additional budget justifications for their use in advocating for the program with the Committees. Both the House and Senate versions of the *FY 2021 Interior Appropriations* bill provided full funding for PILT and this funding was also included in the final version of the legislation enacted as part of the omnibus appropriations package.

#### Outer Continental Shelf

We continued to support enactment of legislation such as Representative Carbajal's H.R. 279, the *California Clean Coast Act*, to protect California's coast from outer

continental shelf (OCS) development. The House version of the *FY 2021 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Act* included provisions that would provide a one-year moratorium on additional offshore oil and gas leasing activities. However, the Senate Appropriations Committee did not include these provisions in its bill and the final version included in the omnibus appropriations package did not include the moratorium.

### Los Padres Wilderness

We reiterated the County's support for the *Central Coast Heritage Protection Act* to the House Natural Resources Committee and the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Introduced by Representative Carbajal as H.R. 2199 and by Senators Harris and Feinstein as S. 1111, the legislation would expand wilderness and wild and scenic river designations in the Los Padres National Forest, the Carrizo Plain National Monument, and designate the Condor National Recreation Trail. Representative Carbajal was able to achieve House approval of the legislation by including it in H.R. 2546, the *Protecting America's Wilderness Act* and subsequently in H.R. 6395, the *FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act*. However, the final version of the Defense Authorization Act, enacted over President Trump's veto, did not include these public lands designations.

### Clean Air

We urged the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to provide the highest possible level of funding for EPA's State and Local Air Quality programs, citing the importance of the Section 103 & 105 programs in providing resources to the County to perform basic air pollution control activities. President Trump's Budget Request proposed a \$76 million cut in funding for these programs. However, the *FY 2021 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act*, enacted as part of the year-end omnibus funding package, rejected these proposed cuts and provided level funding of \$229.5 million.

## **Health Care Programs**

### Federally Qualified Health Centers

Throughout the year, we advocated for Congress to pass legislation to continue and expand the Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) program. FQHCs are a critical component of the health care safety net and are eligible for funds through several Health Resources and Services Administration programs. In addition, the County was awarded \$1.5 million in supplemental funding for FQHC pandemic response under legislation enacted in 2020. Several short-term extensions for the program were needed after the program expired in May 2020. H.R. 133, the *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act*, which was signed into law in December, provides a three-year authorization of mandatory funding for the program through the end of fiscal year 2023.



### Funding for County Health Care Programs

In addition to emergency supplemental funding provided through the five pandemic relief packages enacted in 2020, we continued to advocate for public health programs of importance to the County in the annual appropriations process. The *FY 2021 Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Act* was included in H.R. 133, the *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act*, which was signed into law in December. Funding levels for key programs in the legislation are as follows:

	<b>Final FY20</b>	<b>Trump FY21</b>	<b>Final FY21</b>
<b>Community Health Centers</b>	\$1.6 billion	\$1.7 billion	\$1.68 billion
<b>Substance Abuse Block Grants</b>	\$1.86 billion	\$1.86 billion	\$1.86 billion
<b>Mental Health Block Grant</b>	\$722.5 million	\$757.5 million	\$757.5 million
<b>Preventive HHS Block Grant</b>	\$160 million	\$160 million	\$160 million
<b>AIDS Drug Assistance Program</b>	\$900 million	\$900 million	\$900 million
<b>Maternal and Child Health</b>	\$687.7 million	\$760.7 million	\$712.7 million
<b>Public Health Preparedness Cooperative Agreements</b>	\$675 million	\$675 million	\$695 million

### Affordable Care Act

We worked with county and other stakeholders to closely monitor any activity that could impact the Affordable Care Act. The focus of activity regarding the ACA has shifted to the judiciary, with the Supreme Court currently reviewing a Texas court case that ruled that the law became unconstitutional when Congress reduced to zero the penalty for forgoing coverage. The Supreme Court had upheld the 2010 law in 2012 in part by calling the penalty a tax. A ruling on the case is not expected until spring or summer 2021. Many members of Congress have already announced plans for a legislative response if the ACA is undermined.

## Homelessness, Housing and Community Development

As work began on FY 2021 appropriations, we contacted the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, our local Congressional delegation, and Senators Harris and Feinstein to advocate for homeless assistance and other housing and community development programs of significance to the County in the *FY 2021 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Related Agencies Appropriations* bill. We joined with other stakeholders in urging Congress to reject the funding reductions proposed by President Trump’s FY 2021 Budget Request that included proposals to eliminate CDBG and HOME funding. As part of these efforts, members of the local delegation agreed to sign on to “Dear Colleague” letters to the appropriators in support of the programs. We also provided funding justifications to our delegation for their use in supporting the programs.

The *FY 2021 Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act* was included in the omnibus funding bill that was signed into law in December and provides the following funding for key HUD programs:

	Final FY20	Trump FY21	Final FY21
<b>CDBG</b>	\$3.4 billion	Zero	\$3.45 billion
<b>HOME Investment Partnership</b>	\$1.35 billion	Zero	\$1.35 billion
<b>Homeless Assistance</b>	\$2.8 billion	\$2.77 billion	\$3 billion
<b>Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS</b>	\$410 million	\$330 million	\$430 million
<b>HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing</b>	\$40 million	Zero	\$40 million
<b>Housing for the Elderly</b>	\$793 million	\$853 million	\$855 million

During 2020, Santa Barbara County was allocated the following funding through HUD programs:

- \$1,259,696 in formula CDBG funding,
- \$1,265,645 under the HOME Program,
- \$3,031,855 from HUD pandemic relief awards, and
- \$2.01 million for projects in the County serving the homeless.

H.R. 133, the *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act*, includes \$25 billion for a new Emergency Rental Assistance program, which will provide an estimated \$13 million to the County of Santa Barbara. In addition, provisions were included in H.R. 133 to speed the allocation of Continuum of Care (CoC) funds for homeless assistance next year. Under these provisions, grantees will receive the same CoC funding as they did in FY 2019, instead of having to compete again for funding through the lengthy HUD process.

### **Immigration Reform**

We continued to closely monitor legislative activity related to immigration to advocate the County's support for bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform that includes an earned path to citizenship and continuation of protections provided under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. In 2019, the House passed H.R. 6, the *American Dream and Promise Act*, which would have created a permanent resident status on a conditional basis for long-term residents who entered the United States as children. Although Senator Durbin (D-IL) and Judiciary Chair Graham (R-SC) jointly introduced S. 874, the *Dream Act of 2019*, the Senate Committee did not act on the legislation.

The Supreme Court on June 18 invalidated the Trump Administration decision to rescind the DACA program on the grounds that the effort violated the Administrative Procedure Act by not having a reasoned explanation for the action. In early December, a lower federal court ordered the Department of Homeland Security to begin accepting first-time applications to the program again. House Democratic leaders have pledged to bring up immigration reform legislation in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress and President-elect Biden has pledged to issue an executive order reinstating DACA.

### **Public Works and Infrastructure**

#### Infrastructure/Highway Bill

We have continued to advocate for legislation to fund the broad scope of infrastructure needs in the County, including reauthorization of surface transportation programs. Representative Carbajal served as Vice Chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee during the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress and we worked closely with him to advocate for infrastructure investment. We also coordinated our advocacy with the National Association of County Engineers,

leveraging Public Works Director McGolpin's role as President of that organization to advocate for a "fix-it-first/Mainstreet USA" philosophy.

H.R. 2, the *Moving Forward Act*, was passed by the House just before the Independence Day recess. This legislation included a \$494 billion reauthorization of surface transportation programs and hundreds of billions of dollars in funding for other infrastructure, such as airports, broadband, public housing, clean energy grants, health care infrastructure, and drinking water programs. The legislation also included several tax provisions drafted by the House Ways and Means Committee to support green energy use and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Although some significant infrastructure legislation was drafted in the Senate at the committee level, this effort was much more limited in size and scope than the House-passed *Moving Forward Act*. The full Senate never considered a multi-year surface transportation program reauthorization bill during 2020. As a result, a short-term extension of current program authorizations was enacted through October 1, 2021, thus ensuring that these issues will be high on the congressional agenda in the coming year.

#### Lower Mission Creek

We continued to work with County staff on efforts to obtain further funding opportunities for the Lower Mission Creek Project and provided members of the local Congressional delegation with background information for their use in advocating for the project. However, the continuing moratorium on Congressional earmarks makes it extremely important that projects be included in the annual Corps budget request to receive funding. As a result, the Appropriations Committees did not include specific funding for County projects in the *FY 2021 Energy and Water Appropriations* bill.

On July 30, the House passed H.R. 7575, the *Water Resources Development Act of 2020*, to reauthorize Army Corps of Engineers projects and policies. We carefully reviewed the bill for any provisions that would impact the County, ensuring that ongoing efforts by Congress to de-authorize older projects would not impact projects such as Lower Mission Creek. At Representative Carbajal's request, the legislation includes report language that encourages the Corps to initiate a reevaluation study of the LMC project to account for population growth, property values, and any new disaster threats associated with the project area. This could be helpful in achieving a better benefit-cost evaluation of the project, which would greatly improve the chances for construction funding. Although the full Senate did not vote on a separate WRDA 2020 proposal, a compromise version of the legislation was included in H.R. 133, the *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act*, which was signed into law in December.

#### Lake Cachuma

We assisted the County throughout the year in advocating with the Bureau of Reclamation on a variety of issues related to Lake Cachuma, including upgrades to the

federal facilities that serve the recreational users. We discussed the need for funding with the Commissioner's staff and with the Appropriations Committee, but resources to address additional facility upgrades continue to be scarce due to the earmark moratorium.

## **Public Safety**

### Public Safety Funding

We urged our local delegation's support for the County's public safety funding priorities and provided them briefing information for their use in working with the Appropriations Committees. The *FY 2021 Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations Act* was ultimately included in H.R. 133, the *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act*, which was signed into law in December. The funding levels for key programs in the legislation are as follows:

	<b>FY 2020 Enacted</b>	<b>FY 2021 Trump</b>	<b>FY 2021 Enacted</b>
<b>Byrne Justice Assistance Grant</b>	\$547 million	\$411.7 million	\$484 million
<b>Violence Against Women</b>	\$502.5 million	\$498.5 million	\$513.5 million
<b>Community Oriented Policing</b>	\$343 million	Zero	\$386 million
<b>State Criminal Alien Assistance Program</b>	\$244 million	Zero	\$244 million
<b>DNA/forensic-related programs</b>	\$132 million	\$104.5 million	\$141 million
<b>Second Chance</b>	\$90 million	\$87.5 million	\$100 million
<b>Mental Health Collaboration</b>	\$33 million	\$33 million	\$35 million
<b>Juvenile Justice</b>	\$320 million	\$227.5 million	\$346 million

### Immigration Impacts on Public Safety

We continued to advocate for FY 2021 funding for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) and provided budget justifications to our delegation for their use in supporting the program with the Appropriations Committees. Santa Barbara County received \$296,307 under SCAAP for FY 2019. FY 2020 allocations have not

been processed by the Administration. The President's FY 2021 Budget Request proposed elimination of SCAAP, leaving it to Congress to reinstate funding to State and local governments to defray some of the costs of incarcerating undocumented immigrants. The *FY 2021 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Act*, which was included in H.R. 133, the *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act*, provides level funding for SCAAP at \$244 million.

#### Inmate Health Care

We contacted the Senate Finance Committee and the House Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means in support of legislation that would remove the so-called "inmate exception" that prevents individuals in the County's jail awaiting trial from being eligible for a variety of federal benefits, including Medicaid, Medicare, SSI and CHIP. Estimates of the number of non-adjudicated inmates who would otherwise be eligible for these benefits vary, but reinstatement of their eligibility would have a significant impact on the County's costs for inmate health care.

Representative Hastings (D-FL) introduced H.R. 1345, the *Restoring the Partnership for County Health Care Costs Act*, to address this issue. In addition, Senator Merkley (D-OR) introduced S. 2626, the *Restoring Health Benefits for Justice-Involved Individuals Act*, which would allow for continued access to Medicare, the Children's Health Insurance Program and veterans' health benefits while an individual is awaiting trial. Senator Markey (D-MA) has also introduced S. 2628, the *Equity in Pretrial Medicaid Coverage Act*, which supports continued access to Medicaid benefits while an individual is awaiting trial. We have urged our local delegation to support these measures and are continuing to work in conjunction with NACo and the National Sheriffs Association on the issue. However, neither the House nor the Senate acted on this legislation in 2020.

#### Violence Against Women Act

We urged the Senate Judiciary Committee to move legislation to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), citing the importance of these resources to local law enforcement officials for combatting domestic violence and protecting victims. We also contacted Senators Harris and Feinstein to thank them for their support for this effort. The House passed H.R. 1585, the *Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act*, in 2019 and Senator Feinstein introduced similar legislation as S. 2843. Both bills include provisions to extend these programs through 2024. However, the Senate Judiciary Committee did not schedule action on the legislation.

#### Conception Boat Fire

Following the 2019 Conception boat fire in Santa Barbara, Representative Carbajal introduced H.R. 5413, the *Small Passenger Vessel Safety Act*, to implement several boat safety improvements and Senator Feinstein introduced the companion legislation as S. 3042. Representative Carbajal was able to attach this legislation as an amendment to H.R. 6395, the *FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)*. Although President Trump vetoed the NDAA in late December, both the

House and the Senate voted to override the veto and the *Small Passenger Vessel Safety Act* became law.

Key reforms in the bill include:

- Requires boats like the *Conception* to have no less than two means of escape to different parts of the vessel.
- Mandates safety standards for the handling and storage of phones, cameras and other electronic devices with lithium-ion batteries.
- Establishes stricter standards for interconnected fire alarm systems.

## **Social Services**

### Nutrition/Food Assistance Programs

The pandemic disruption has dramatically increased the need for food assistance through programs such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and food banks. To begin to address these needs, H.R. 6201, the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act*, included \$500 million of WIC Funding for the COVID-19 emergency and \$400 million to assist local food banks to meet increased demand. This was followed by enactment of H.R. 748, the *CARES Act*, which included \$15.5 billion for SNAP, \$450 million for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and an additional \$8.8 billion for child nutrition programs including WIC. A fifth pandemic relief package was signed into law in late December and provides an additional \$13 billion for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and increases the benefit level by 15 percent. The legislation also includes an additional \$400 million for TEFAP and \$175 million for Older Americans Act “Meals on Wheels” Nutrition Services.

### Social Services Funding

We advocated for H.R. 7947, the *Supporting Foster Youth & Families through the Pandemic Act*, to provide immediate relief and assistance for vulnerable foster youth, their caregivers, and families. The legislation increases funding for transition to adulthood programs and includes temporary programmatic flexibilities to ensure that foster youth who age out of the program continue to receive support and services. H.R. 7947 was eventually included in H.R. 133, the *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act*, which was signed into law in December.

We also worked in coordination with NACo and the California State Association of Counties to support increased social services funding for pandemic response. The *FY 2021 Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act*, includes \$1.7 billion for the Social Services Block Grant program, rather than the elimination of the program proposed by the Trump Administration. In October, the House passed H.R. 925, the *HEROES Act*, which proposed an additional \$9.6 billion in funding through the Social Services Block Grant program with language requiring that at least 50 percent of the funding be passed through to the local level. H.R. 925 was not

taken up by the Senate, however, causing this issue to carry over into the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress for possible consideration.

### Adult Services and Elder Abuse

We contacted the House and Senate committees of jurisdiction and our local delegation to reiterate the County's support for reauthorization and funding of the Older Americans Act's programs, emphasizing the wide range of critical services OAA supports for the elderly population in Santa Barbara County. H.R. 4334, the *Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020*, was signed into law in March to authorize these programs through 2024. The legislation includes a seven-percent funding increase for OAA programs in the first year, then annual six-percent increases in the following years and establishes a National Research, Demonstration, and Evaluation Center for the Aging Network.

In addition, we urged enactment of legislation to reauthorize and fund programs through the Elder Justice Act. Senate Finance Committee Chairman Grassley (R-IA) introduced S. 4182 the *Emergency Support for Nursing Homes and Elder Justice Reform Act of 2020*, in July which included provisions to reauthorize Elder Justice Act programs through 2023. The bill also sought to improve existing programs to protect older Americans and provide help to nursing homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although S. 4182 was not acted on, the pandemic relief package that was enacted in late December, H.R. 133, includes \$100 million to address abuse, neglect, and exploitation of the elderly, including adult protective service and long-term care ombudsman activities.

### TANF Reauthorization

We have been advocating for a multi-year reauthorization for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program that would increase funding for childcare, job training and other aspects of the program and provide California more flexibility in the administration of the program. This is an issue that has carried over from the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, with several short-term extensions enacted to keep the program operational. Congress included a one-year extension for TANF in H.R. 133, the *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act*, which was signed into law in December. We are continuing to urge enactment of a longer-term authorization that addresses County priorities in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress.

### **Tax Credits for Paid Leave**

We advocated that Congress include public employers like the County in the tax benefits that are intended to help offset the cost of new paid leave requirements during the pandemic. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act expanded access to paid leave by requiring public and many private employers to extend these benefits to their employees. The law included payroll tax credits to offset the costs associated with paid leave for private employers, however those provisions excluded public employers like the County. Representative Cox (D-CA) introduced H.R. 6643, the *Supporting State and Local Leaders Act*, which would give public



employers access to the tax credits to help state and local governments cover the costs associated with the new paid leave programs, which Representative Carbajal agreed to cosponsor. Senator Feinstein has cosponsored the Senate version of the bill, S. 3653. This legislation was included in the House-passed H.R. 6800, the *HEROES Act*, but was dropped from consideration during the final negotiations over a fifth pandemic relief package.

### **Census**

Partway through 2020, the Trump Administration requested more time to complete the decennial census. The House-passed H.R. 6800, the *HEROES Act*, included language to allow a 120-day extension, but that bill was never considered by the Senate. Subsequently, the Administration insisted that the Census Bureau was able to deliver an accurate decennial count by the end of the year and moved to wrap things up without an extension. Senator Feinstein and other members of the local delegation called on the Census Bureau to ensure an accurate census during the coronavirus pandemic by not stopping its counting efforts early, but this remained a point of contention throughout the remainder of the year. Most recently, the Census Bureau missed the December 31 deadline for transmitting the census data, raising the possibility that the issue will carry over into the Biden Administration.