

# The Capitol Report

By

The California Family  
Resource Association

February 2007

Welcome to the first installment of the CFRA Capitol Report. This monthly newsletter will keep you informed about what is happening in Sacramento and how CFRA is working to make families stronger. We hope you find the Capitol Report useful and look forward to your feedback.

## ***The Legislature is Back in Action***

The California Legislature convened for the start of the 2007-08 session on January 3<sup>rd</sup> with dozens of newly elected legislators arriving in Sacramento and renewing the call for bi-partisan cooperation.

The New Year also brought about a general consensus regarding legislative priorities. Health care, education, and the environment appear to be taking center stage for the 2007-08 session with the Governor taking the lead in announcing his goal to provide health insurance for every Californian. While no one can argue with the need for expanded health care coverage, CFRA will be carefully monitoring provisions of the Governor's proposal that call for mandatory coverage for all families. The Governor's office has not resolved how low-income families will pay for mandated coverage or how the mandate will be enforced.

The Governor also released his 2007-08 state budget in mid-January shocking many observers with proposed full-family sanctions on CalWORKs families, limiting child-only CalWORKs cases to 60 months, and suspending the anticipated 4.21% cost of living adjustment for CalWORKs recipients. The Assembly and Senate version of the budget are

yet to be released but CFRA expects to work with legislative leaders and other family advocates to try and reverse the Governor's actions.

### ***Legislation to Watch***

CFRA has been carefully analyzing newly introduced legislation for bills of specific interest to family resource centers and family-strengthening organizations. One bill CFRA will be paying close attention to is Assembly Bill 21 by Assembly Member Dave Jones of Sacramento. AB 21 would create a state earned income tax credit providing low-income workers the ability to qualify for a substantial cash tax rebate no matter how little income they earned.

Who would be eligible for the credit? AB 21 would make a state EITC available to the working poor, regardless of whether they have any tax liability (important in California, where the income threshold at which a family of four must begin paying taxes is \$45,658\*).

Eligibility for the credit would be based on the same criteria used for the federal credit. In 2006, the credit was available to those earning up to:

\$36,348 (\$38,348 married filing jointly) with two or more qualifying children;

\$32,001 (\$34,001 married filing jointly) with one qualifying child;

\$12,120 (\$14,120 married filing jointly) with no qualifying children.

The credit to eligible recipients would amount to \$680 per year for households with two or more qualifying children, \$412 per year for households with one qualifying child, and \$62 per year with no children.

CFRA is working closely with Assemblyman Jones and looks forward to supporting this bill as an effective policy to promote family economic success.

### ***Legislative Committee Assignments***

A new legislative year also brings with it new legislative committee assignments. These committees are critical in the legislative process as they review each and every bill introduced, draft changes to the bill, and vote on whether the bill should go to a full vote of the Assembly or Senate.

Because of committees' importance, CFRA is highlighting here a few of the key budget committee members who review policy areas that are important to family resource centers. Since many of these legislators came from city councils or county boards of supervisors, CFRA members may have existing relationships with them that can be used to communicate CFRA positions.

Do you have a relationship with any of the following legislators?

Assembly Members

John Laird – Democrat from Monterey/Santa Cruz  
Patty Berg – Democrat from Humbolt  
Jim Beall – Democrat from Santa Clara  
Hector De La Torre – Democrat from Los Angeles  
Ed Hernandez - Democrat from Los Angeles  
Bill Maze – Republican from Kern County  
Roger Niello – Republican from Sacramento

Senate Members

Denise Ducheny – Democrat from San Diego  
Elaine Alquist – Democrat from Santa Clara  
Dave Cogdill – Republican from Fresno  
Alex Padilla – Democrat from Los Angeles

**New Member Profile**

*Each month the CFRA Capitol Report will introduce you to a new member of the California Legislature. Our goal is to familiarize you with the people making decisions that impact California families and possibly create a connection where a CFRA member has a pre-existing relationship with a legislator. This month will highlight Assembly Member Jose Solorio of Santa Ana.*

**Assemblyman Jose Solorio** was elected to the 69th Assembly District in November 2006. The district has parts of Orange County including the cities of Santa Ana, Anaheim, and Garden Grove.

Assemblyman Solorio believes that as one of the top economies in the world, California deserves to have one of the best school systems in the country – making education his top priority.

Before being elected to the State Assembly, he was elected to the Santa Ana City Council in 2000 and re-elected in 2004. He was appointed to the Orange County Water District Board of Directors and serves on the Board of Directors for the Boys and Girls Club of Santa Ana, and the Advisory Board for UCI's Department of Planning, Policy, and Design.

Assemblyman Solorio hopes to continue using his education, government and business experiences to help address regional policy challenges, while empowering others in the community to realize their hopes and dreams.

As the son of migrant farm workers, Assemblyman Solorio earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in social ecology at University of California, Irvine and a Masters degree in public policy from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He lives in Santa Ana, with his wife Linn, a teacher at Valley High School, and their two sons.