

California Association of Public Authorities
for In-Home Supportive Services
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April 3, 2009

The Honorable John Benoit
California State Senate
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 246 (Benoit)
CAPA Position: OPPOSE

Dear Senator Benoit,

The California Association of Public Authorities (CAPA) must respectfully oppose your legislation, SB 246, which is scheduled to be heard April 14 in the Senate Human Services Committee. CAPA represents 52 Public Authorities and Non-Profit Consortia operating in 55 counties, each of whom serve as the local employer of record for the IHSS program and maintain the provider registries.

SB 246 would seem to require that the Public Authorities conduct background checks through the Department of Justice of all IHSS providers, and to add all providers to the registries. We do appreciate that systemwide fingerprinting and DOJ checks may prevent criminal activity in the program specific to a provider use of false or duplicate identities. However, we believe the incidence of such activities doesn't warrant the millions of dollars required to implement SB 246.

A DOJ background check itself costs \$32. If a county doesn't have access to a live scan system, the fingerprinting of providers would be likely done at police stations or other outlet, at a cost of \$5-10 each. Otherwise, Public Authorities would have to purchase their own machines (for roughly \$80,000) and conduct the scans, which including the interaction with the provider would require roughly half-an-hour of staff time. Together, the costs of a DOJ check would total roughly \$50-55 per provider. With roughly 380,000 providers participating in IHSS, the initial outlay just to process the current workforce would exceed \$20 million.

Additionally, we would note that approximately 70 percent of IHSS providers are family members, and so aren't now listed on the registries since they may not be available or interested in caring for additional consumers. SB 246 would require that these 278,000 family caregivers be added to the registries, apparently for the sole purpose of receiving the background check. Entering this volume of providers into the registries, despite the fact that the providers aren't available for referrals, would seem to add a vast inefficiency to IHSS at a time when efficiencies are being sought in all State programs.

CAPA does believe efficiency can be improved and the program solidified with modest investments in key areas, including funding for case management, consumer and provider training, and technology (such as automatic timecards) that has been specifically adapted for IHSS use. If the State of California is able to spend \$20 million on improving program integrity, as SB 246 would suggest, we would be eager to discuss various options that we believe would yield greater benefits.

Please, you or your staff should feel free to contact us to discuss our position.

We appreciate your consideration,

Don Schinske
Legislative Advocate

cc. The Honorable Carol Liu, Chair
Senate Human Services Committee
The Honorable Abel Maldonado, Vice Chair
Members, Senate Human Services
Consultant, Senate Human Services
Mary Tinker, Legislative Chair, CAPA
Bernadette Lynch, Board President, CAPA
Trula LaCalle, Executive Director, CAPA