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April 7, 2014

Senator Ellen Corbett
Budget Committee Member
State Capitol, Room 313
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Marty Block
Budget Committee Member
State Capitol, Room 4090
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senators Corbett and Block:

We have observed that the traditional budget process, one that is focused on budget actions at the subcommittee level with the Legislative Analyst's Office and the Department of Finance as key presenters of the proposed budget, seems to be evolving. Now, many of the more complex and controversial policy and fiscal issues are addressed by the full budget committee, and "expert panels" or policy researchers are playing a large role in both the full committee and budget subcommittee discussions.

We agree there is great value in hearing from policy experts and researchers, but we are concerned about the clear tendency for presenters to be homogenous in their views. This tends to narrow the discussion to one perspective and undermines any real public policy debate. Related to this point, we believe that input from Senate Republicans into the selection process for these "experts" has been routinely disregarded. For example, this year our requests to include the State Auditor as well as District Attorneys/Fraud Investigators on the expert panel for the CalFresh hearing on January 8, 2014, and a researcher from the non-partisan Reason Foundation on the expert panel for the February 13, 2014 hearing on Expenditure of Cap and Trade Auction Revenues were denied.

These public budget hearings should not be orchestrated affairs designed to limit the public discussion to one particular viewpoint or outcome. Rather, we believe the people of California are best served by allowing a diverse discussion wherein many competing views, research, and ideas can be debated and considered

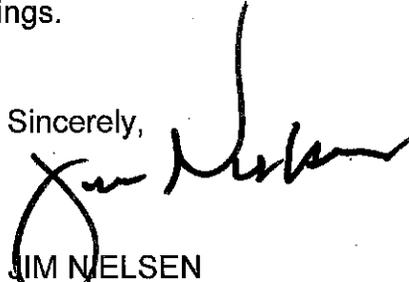


fairly and openly. The Senate's motto is still *senatoris est civitatis libertatem tueri* ("It is the duty of the senators to protect the liberty of the people").

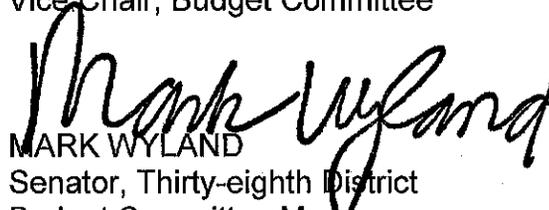
On April 10th Senate Budget Subcommittee #1 and Subcommittee #3 have scheduled a hearing on CalWorks child care, transitional kindergarten, and preschool issues. We understand that you have invited Dr. Jill Cannon of the RAND Corporation to present her research at the beginning of the hearing. Once again, it is our view that the discussion would benefit from additional expert testimony and towards that end we respectfully request that Lisa Snell, Director of Education and Child Welfare for the *non-partisan* public policy Reason Foundation, also be invited to share her research and expertise.

Our goal is to work collaboratively and productively with you and your staff. We note that typically, these expert panels are heavily engaged in the discussion for virtually the entire committee hearing. The current committee process, allowing a few minutes at the end of a long hearing for other public testimony is in no way fair, balanced, or comparable to the time and focus granted to the invited experts. We hope that you will support our efforts to enrich the budget subcommittee discussions by including additional expert participants in this and future budget subcommittee hearings.

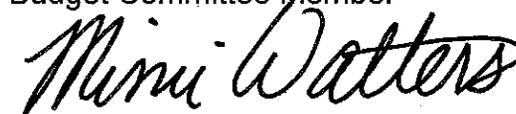
Sincerely,



JIM NIELSEN
Senator, Fourth District
Vice Chair, Budget Committee



MARK WYLAND
Senator, Thirty-eighth District
Budget Committee Member



MIMI WALTERS
Senator, Thirty-seventh District
Budget Committee Member

cc: Senator Mark Leno
Chair, Budget Committee