



Virginia Association of Counties

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March 3, 2010

The Honorable Ed Houck, Chairman
Senate Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Resources
Senate of Virginia
PO Box 396, Office 326
Richmond, Virginia 23218

The Honorable Harvey Morgan, Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Resources
Virginia House of Delegates
PO Box 406, Office 523
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Subject: VACo's budget letter on health and human resources

Dear Mr. Chairman,

Knowing this biennial budget requires tough decisions in funding programs and providing support to localities delivering services, please understand that your decisions along with local decisions could have an impact on the quality of life for many of the Commonwealth's most vulnerable citizens.

Thank you for minimizing funding reductions in health and human services in FY 2010 when ARRA funds became available. This year proves most difficult when confronted with the impact of a \$2 billion budget hole. We all understand the budget (FY 2011 and FY 2012) reported by both houses relies heavily on VRS funds to fill important gaps in K-12, Compensation Board agencies, public safety and higher education.

Your committee has minimized health and human resources reductions in your respective budgets, but deep cuts in some programs compromise the ability of local governments to deliver services and may put some vulnerable Virginians at-risk.

Now is the time for you to urge your respective conferees to support services for our vulnerable citizens. That being said, VACo offers the following budget recommendations:

Child Advocacy Centers

VACo opposes a \$1 million reduction in funding for child advocacy centers listed in the House budget. These centers provide counseling for children and adults who have been involved in incidents of neglect, abuse or exploitation.

Comprehensive Services Act

The Senate has included an incentive for localities to create regional services for at-risk youth by proposing an equalized match rate for contiguous counties that develop regional services. VACo supports this incentive because it permits localities to share services and build a service infrastructure that prevents “high end” services out-of-state or out-of-the-region. This regional approach will serve children and families better by making services more accessible and family interaction plausible.

VACo opposes action in the Senate budget that increases the local match rate for Medicaid residential services. Residential service providers have been increasingly signing on as Medicaid providers to make services more affordable for state and local governments. The Senate action to increase local match will only serve as another “roadblock” for services and deter any efforts to build an appropriate mix of community based and residential services.

Local Health Departments

VACo opposes funding reductions (\$9.1 million) contained in the House budget for local health department services. By placing greater program responsibilities on shrinking staff, the reductions could jeopardize preventive health services, primary care and immunizations and the ability to respond to disease outbreaks. Other funding increases in the Senate budget are welcomed as they relate to better health care services for adults and children, i.e. free clinics and community health centers.

Department of Medical Assistance

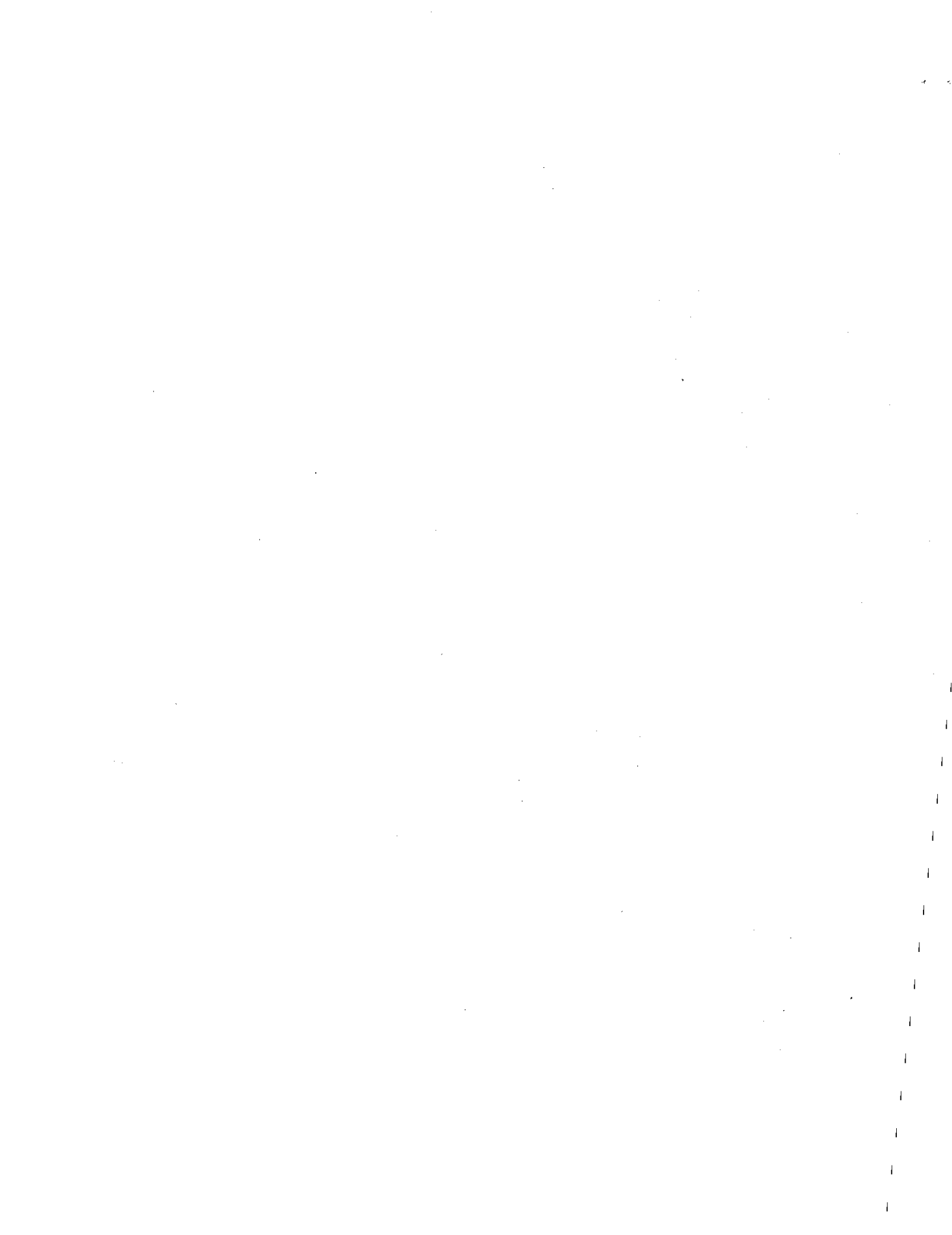
VACo applauds the House budget in lifting the freeze on Medicaid Waiver slots. By lifting the freeze, the House has restored \$17 million for our most vulnerable Virginians.

Commonwealth Center for Adolescents and Children (CCCA)

VACo supports the budget from each house to restore funding and prevent the closure of CCCA.

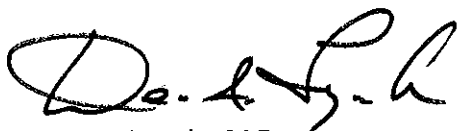
Department of Social Services

VACo opposes reductions in funding in both budgets for Healthy Families programs. The programs provide intensive in-home services for at-risk families. Successful models across the Commonwealth have been recognized as leaders in improving the quality of life for many families. Now is not the time to scale back the program, but expand to underserved areas as a preventive tool to prevent the breakup of families.



Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dean A. Lynch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dean" being the most prominent.

Dean A. Lynch, CAE
Director of Intergovernmental Affairs

Copy:

Senate Subcommittee Members

House Subcommittee Members

Joe Flores

Susan Massart

Handwritten notes in the top right corner, including a date and some illegible text.

Vertical handwritten text along the right edge of the page, possibly a list or index.