



CALIFORNIA STATE SENATE SPECIAL SESSION BUDGET PLAN

SBX1-1 A First Step To Defending California And Our Values In Court

Summary

The California State Senate joins the Governor in the call to protect California values and the fundamental rights of all our residents from potential threats of the next federal administration.

The Special Session provides an opportunity to take a critical first step to provide a downpayment on resources necessary to provide legal support to defend California's nation-leading policies on the environment, healthcare and infrastructure. While the Senate embraces the Governor's proposal to support legal actions and defense of state agencies and the Department of Justice, the Senate's plan goes further and supports local governments, legal and community based organizations that are on the front lines of defending vulnerable Californians directly threatened by federal actions, including Asian Pacific Islander, Black, Latino, LGBTQ, and women.

In total, the Senate Special Session Budget Plan provides a total of \$60 million, including at least \$25 million for state agencies and the Department of Justice, up to \$10 million for local County Counsel and City Attorney offices, and \$25 million for local front line legal and community based organizations that protects the civil rights of vulnerable populations.

The potential federal actions threaten more than just those directly under attack. All California families, communities, and California's nation leading economy could all be damaged and ripped apart by economic and social policies outlined in Project 2025. The potential damage these policies will do to the state's economy, the nation's fifth largest, and our families are real and drastic. The Senate Special Session Budget Plan is only a first step in protecting California, and additional actions will be taken in the months ahead through the regular policy and budget processes.

Below are more details of the Senate Special Session Budget Plan.

Collaborating with California's Prosecutors to Protect California Values and Defend the Rule of Law

- Provides \$35 million for the Attorney General's office for litigation efforts against the federal government and for actions threatened to be taken by the federal government.
 - At least \$25 million of this amount to be used for state legal actions, as proposed by the Governor to defend adverse action against our laws related to climate change, clean water, reproductive healthcare and the rights of our vulnerable communities – immigrants, LGBTQ, Asian Pacific Islander and Black residents.
 - Up to \$10 million for city attorneys and county counsels for similar litigation efforts to protect reproductive health, environmental justice, LGBTQ civil rights, immigrant rights, and other vulnerable communities on behalf of the interests of the people of California.

Defending the Civil Rights and Liberties of All Californians

- \$10 million for the Equal Access Fund (EAF) to defend civil rights of Californians, including providing legal services to vulnerable persons at risk of detention, eviction, wage theft, deportation, intimate partner violence, and other actions that put their safety at risk. This money will flow into the existing infrastructure of how California primarily funds legal aid and legal service providers. This funding will flow to existing providers who currently receive EAF funds.

- Currently, there are 115 organizations that receive EAF funds, which covers the entire state.

Building on Our Existing Governance Structure to Support Our Immigrants and Protect Our Diversity

- \$10 million for One California through the Department of Social Services (CDSS). This money will flow into the existing infrastructure of how California primarily funds legal service providers and outreach efforts that primarily supports immigrant communities and immigration services. This funding is for existing providers who currently receive One California dollars and will come with increased effort to support rural areas of the state, including the Central Valley.

- Currently, there are 85 organizations that are qualified to receive One California dollars. CDSS has expanded regional Program Administrators in the Los Angeles, San Diego, Bay Area, Central Valley and Inland Empire.

- Examples of how dollars are spent:

- Services to obtain immigration remedies, including U-visas, T-visas, special immigrant juvenile status, Violence Against Women Act petitions, cancellation of removal, asylum, and remedies necessary to enable pursuit of immigration protections;
- Assisting individuals under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and undocumented minors;
- Immigration benefits including advanced parole, employment authorization documents, and Green card renewals;
- Assist with naturalization and appeals; and
- Training and technical assistance to immigrants and organizations located in and serving underserved communities.

Preparing for Any Malicious and Vitriolic Attacks on Our Most Marginalized Communities

- \$5 million for the California Access to Justice Commission. This money is intended to support organizations that are not primarily receiving funding through Equal Access Fund or One California, which continues the Access to Justice Commission's focus of providing legal services that support rural or underserved immigrant communities.

- Specifically, this funding will support infrastructure data security projects to protect client, staff, and volunteer data, such as a person's immigration status, gender, or other personal sensitive information.

- Additionally, the funding will support pro bono legal services for especially vulnerable communities, including establishing an immigration detention representation and coordination program to increase access to counsel to detained individuals in California. This funding is also intended to support individuals denied of other civil rights, including essential medical treatment, equal treatment in employment, and name change applications.