



Herbert Willsmore

Office of the Senator release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From the Office of
Senator Randolph Collier
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As most of us read in the newspapers recently, Governor Reagan rescinded the \$10 million cut he had ordered in home care services to welfare recipients.

And while I agree with the Governor when he comes to grips with the runaway costs of Welfare in California, which have grown to a staggering degree, I was glad to see that he restored the funds to aid the aged, blind and disabled in our State.

But in restoring the funds he accused welfare workers of forcing his hand by reducing such services to those who need it most. He charged those entrusted with carrying out the program of deliberately violating its intent and moving immediately to cut off essential services to those most in need, and at the same time made no effort to cooperate in elimination of fraud and extravagance.

Actually, the cuts that were originally ordered July 10 by the Governor were for attendant care of the aged, the blind and the disabled, from a maximum of \$300 a month to \$150 a month, and would have completely wiped out part-time housekeeping or domestic care, now limited to \$50 a month, plus tightening eligibility restrictions.

State welfare officials said the changes were not intended to force recipients into nursing homes — as some had charged — and larger grants could be allowed in those cases.

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County welfare officials, on the other hand, countered that the regulations did not contain such an exception, that if such exceptions were made they would have to be at the expense of others in the program, and that the counties were overspent from the start, since July funds had already been committed when the Governor made the retroactive cutback.

I have had many calls and letters from elderly constituents who feared they would be forced into homes for the aged or institutions because of the reduction.

It would not only be a tragic act, but an increased burden to the taxpayers, since care in convalescent hospitals or homes for the elderly would cost from \$500 to \$600 a month. This would be false economy.

For those unfamiliar with the program, allowances for these programs are over and above basic aid payments. Attendant care is arranged via a special need allowance with which the recipient buys for himself the services of an attendant. The Homes Services program entails direct service being provided to the recipient by a county employee or somebody under contract with the county.

As I have said many times, I'm all for halting unchecked welfare spending, but I agree the Governor's decision was the wrong place to start. I congratulate him on having the fortitude to rescind his order before irreparable damage was done.