

# Federal cuts to hit California spending plan

By Michael Doyle, Sacramento Bee

WASHINGTON – There are about 866,000 Californians who are paying for college with federal Pell grants. This week, they should count themselves lucky.

The Pell grant program was granted a rare immunity card in the wide-ranging budget austerity measure negotiated by the White House and congressional leaders. The undergraduate loans are shielded from further cuts for at least two years. Most everything else is vulnerable.

Central Valley farm subsidies are sure to change. Southern California defense contractors will feel the pinch. California might as well forget about general federal help for the state's overall budget woes.

California, overall, will take a special whack in the budget-cutting to come, if for no other reason than it currently soaks up so many federal dollars. The federal government spent \$345 billion in California in 2009, and that will shrink.

And though the 74-page bill set for House and Senate approval leaves most cuts to be decided later, it's a bleak foreshadowing for some specific projects such as California's ambitious high-speed rail project whose initial route is supposed to run from Bakersfield to near Chowchilla.

"If you were to look at this Congress, you'd have to say it will be cutting high-speed rail," noted Rep. Dan Lungren, R-Gold River.

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