

Brown releases budget with significant cuts to health, welfare

By Nicholas Riccardi, Los Angeles Times

Gov. Jerry Brown today released a \$91-billion budget proposal that sharply cuts health and welfare spending, reduces state payrolls by 5 percent and freezes construction of new courthouses.

Brown's revised budget reflects a steadily worsening fiscal picture for California. On Saturday, he announced via YouTube that the state's deficit had grown to \$16 billion, nearly twice what he projected when he released his initial budget proposal in January.

The gap grew, the budget revision states, because Brown over-estimated tax revenues by \$4.3 billion and the federal government and courts blocked \$1.7 billion in cuts the state wanted to make. The remainder of the difference reflects an increase in the amount of money the state is mandated to spend on education under a complex voter-approved formula.

To close the wider gap, Brown has heightened the cuts he wants to make to Medi-Cal, to \$1.2 billion, and maintained another \$1.2 billion in welfare and child-care savings he proposed in January.

He also wants to slash payments to people who care for the disabled by 7 percent and reduce the state payroll through a shorter workweek or wage concessions. He proposed \$500 million in cuts to the state's struggling court system, including a one-year freeze on all new construction projects.

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