

Opinion: EDC budget requires tough decisions

By Don Ashton

Last Friday, I delivered to the Board of Supervisors and publicly released the county's recommended budget. The 422-page document deserves some context.

In theory, crafting a budget should be a relatively simple endeavor. You add up the money that comes in, subtract the cost of mandated programs that must be paid for, and if you're lucky enough to have anything left over, decide where it should be spent. If you're smart, you'll also sock away some of the surplus for a rainy day or an unforeseen emergency. In the case of El Dorado County, and many counties throughout the state, we're running up against some very difficult choices due largely to the uncertainty of our revenue streams and the increasing costs of continuing our current level of services.



Don Ashton

A lot of discussion over budget priorities ends up focusing on the General Fund part of the budget, since this is the part that the board has the most discretion over. The “what comes in” part of our General Fund budget is comprised primarily of property and sales taxes. Given the nature of these revenue sources, they're difficult to control. As for the “what goes out” portion, since counties are a subdivision of the state, many of our programs are mandated by the state but are

underfunded.

On the revenue side, the only way to substantially increase the amount we receive from property taxes is to increase the number of dwellings. Unfortunately, this also comes with increased costs in services and unless done correctly, does not break even. As a result, many counties and cities turn to our other primary funding source: sales tax.

Sales tax can be adjusted by either increasing the number of business within the county or by increasing the sales tax rate. The primary sales tax generator in El Dorado County is our gas stations. Our county sales tax rate is 7.25 percent. For comparison purposes, the sales tax rate in the two incorporated cities in the county, Placerville and South Lake Tahoe, is 8.25 percent and 7.75 percent, respectively. The sales tax rate in Folsom, where many of our residents shop is 7.75 percent; the rate for Placer and Amador counties is the same as ours, 7.25 percent.

A closer comparison between our neighboring counties (Amador, Placer and Sacramento) identifies that El Dorado County has the second highest unincorporated population after Sacramento (Placer is third, Amador is fourth). We have the fewest number of county employees-to-unincorporated residents (1 employee for every 81 residents compared to Sacramento (1:42), Placer (1:41) and Amador (1:58), and we collect \$640 in taxes per unincorporated resident; far less than Sacramento (\$933), Placer (\$1,523), and even Amador (which collects \$1,057/resident).

Take the property tax and sales tax revenue – which are both lower per resident than all three of our neighboring counties – combine that with the obligations the state continues to pass down to counties and increasing retirement costs (CalPERS increases are projected to be \$9 million over the next two years) and it's clear to see we can't do it all.

If the residents of El Dorado County want increased discretionary services, e.g., libraries, veterans, better roads than what the state is willing to provide, and the high quality of service to our seniors, while maintaining the high quality of public safety provided in El Dorado County, we need to offer additional shopping venues – which typically requires larger populations obtained through residential development – or increase the tax rates. If we aren't willing to do either, we must accept that the current level of services to our discretionary but essential services will be reduced.

Here's the bottom line: we have no control over state mandates that are underfunded; we have no control over CalPERS; we have some control over property and sales taxes, but will have to make adjustments in them to maintain service levels. Budgeting. Simple, but not easy.

Tell us what you think by taking a one-minute **survey here**. Or email us at budget.comms@edcgov.us.

Don Ashton is the chief administrative officer for El Dorado County.

Opinion: Calif. healthcare bill is financial folly

By Ted Gaines

Are you ready for California to double your taxes? What about triple or quadruple them? A bill currently making its way through the state Legislature could push tax rates up beyond imagination, making us tax serfs to the state, and driving hundreds of thousands of jobs out of California.

Senate Bill 562, the California Healthcare for All Act, proposes to ban private insurance coverage and force every citizen in the state into the equivalent of the Medi-Cal system we provide for the poor and disabled, where state-provided healthcare would be the only option. The costs would be staggering.



Ted Gaines

A recent analysis by the California Senate Appropriations Committee estimated that implementing SB562 would set back California taxpayers \$400 billion. This year's General Fund spending – including roads, schools, universities, prisons and more – is estimated around \$124 billion. In a highly-taxed state that just recovered from years of massive deficits and still teeters on the edge of fiscal ruin, where is this additional taxpayer money supposed to come from? Four hundred billion is more than \$10,000 a year from every man, woman and child in the state. Do most California families have that kind of money laying around?

That extraordinary cost is consistent with estimates from other states and is the major reason that single-payer schemes have been voted down or abandoned before implementation. New York state is currently proposing its own SB562. In 2019, when New York's plan would be active, the state expects to collect \$82 billion in taxes, but would need another \$91 billion to pay for its single-payer scheme. New York, as is the case with California, will more than double its overall revenue. See a trend?

And that \$91 billion number might be charitable. An analysis by healthcare expert Avik Roy concluded that New York's plan could cost \$226 billion a year, nearly quadrupling the state's current tax collections, just to pay for healthcare, not government's other responsibilities. Roy estimates that the plan would jettison 175,000 jobs from the state, as "high-wage, high-value industries move to neighboring states" as a result. California, a much larger state, could shed hundreds of thousands of jobs under SB562's crushing fiscal mandate.

California's plan also proposes to pay for all care for all residents, regardless of whether they are in the state illegally, or whether they are here legally but just moved here to take advantage of the state's "free" medical care. California, already the king of the tax dollar giveaway, would become the hot new destination for immigrants and indigents seeking care, driving the costs even higher.

And, even if the costs were not fantastically, impossibly high, SB562 presents other problems for California healthcare. Our state suffers from a shortage of healthcare providers, particularly in rural and inner-city areas, a condition that would only be intensified by the provider rate caps in the bill.

Single-payer systems are also prone to deadly wait times since they ration care to reduce costs.

The United States is a medical innovator and California is the nation's bioscience hub. That will disappear in the price-controlled, socialized system California legislators are trying to dump on the people. Price caps, a key component of single payer plans, spell doom to medical innovation.

Remaking the entire healthcare system is a terrible idea if the reform is going to make healthcare slower, less innovative, and wildly more expensive.

SB562 is an ill-advised plan with unpayable costs that would

make California taxpayers sick.

Ted Gaines represents the 1st Senate District, which includes all or parts of Alpine, El Dorado, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, Shasta, Sierra and Siskiyou counties.

Letter: Knights of Columbus at Bread & Broth

To the community,

Being a member of the Knights of Columbus means that you are there to help those in need. On May 15, members of St. Theresa Church's Knights of Columbus were doing just that as they volunteered their time to serve at B&B's Monday meal.

They were a helpful and jovial group that welcomed and fed the hungry diners that came to Grace Hall for a full course, nutritious meal.

"The Knights of Columbus appreciative of the opportunity to assist in the serving of Monday evening's dinner, truly thanks Bread & Broth for the opportunity," said Gary Brand, grand knight. "We were impressed with the guests in attendance, their politeness and their gratitude, and we encourage other clubs and service clubs to avail themselves of the same opportunity offered by B&B."

In addition to sponsoring a B&B Adopt A Day of Nourishment, the Knights of Columbus put many hours into serving St. Theresa Church through fundraisers, pancake breakfasts, spaghetti dinners and helping where needed by the church.

Doing an outstanding job representing the Knights at their AAD sponsorship dinner were Romeo Aladen, Philip Armstrong, Gary Brand, Steve Elder, Steven Quilici, Nicholas Nizich and Earl Scilingo.

Thank you to a wonderful Catholic men's organization and all of its members.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: More senior legal shenanigans in EDC

By Larry Weitzman

It has been recently confirmed from informed sources that a new attorney has been hired by senior legal. Her first day on the job was May 1. On May 25, this newly hired attorney was informed that her job was being eliminated in El Dorado County's new proposed budget for 2017-18.

The new attorney's prior position was in a law firm, a position that she quit in order to take this job with senior legal, which has a staff of one full-time attorney (this new hire), a part-time attorney, a paralegal and a secretary.



Larry Weitzman

In a phone call with the CAO, this columnist asked the question whether he knew or not that as of May 1, just four weeks before the release of the budget, did he know that the entire senior legal program was going to be terminated as has been proposed in the new budget. His answer was no. The upshot of this new El Dorado County budget for the fiscal year from July 1, 2017, to June 30, 2018, means that even this new senior legal attorney who quit her job from a Sacramento law firm to take this job will be fired. According to the proposed budget, she will get a pink slip no later than Aug. 4.

Interesting fact No. 2: on May 5, District 1 Supervisor John Hidahl put out a press release and notice written by the new county public information officer, Carla Hass, telling the world that Hidahl would be having an El Dorado Hills Community Council Meeting on May 8 at 7pm to "offer a great opportunity for residents to learn about what's happening in the community. The featured speaker is Raelene Nunn, the District 1 commissioner on Aging... The county provides several important services to our seniors, including legal assistance and more."

To refresh your memory, just 23 days later, the budget would be published showing no more legal assistance to seniors.

The salary and benefits paid to Hass (about \$150,000/year would pay 60 percent of the EDC budget for senior legal). I am sure this same PIO will spin the termination of senior legal services as a benefit for county residents, like EDC will reduce probate costs for seniors now that conmen can more easily prey on what money they have left to live on.

More troubling is the fact that informed sources knew of this decision on or about May 20, meaning this decision may have been made by the county administration or the strong possibility thereof well prior to May 1, the date EDC hired this new senior legal attorney, as budgets are several months in the making. New hires beware, the decision of your hiring

in the future may be made after the decision to fire you, of course unless you have a high-ranking friend in county government. It's also appears obvious that high ranking county officials knew of this decision for some time.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

Opinion: Growing retirement costs hit Calif. state budget hard

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

California's rapidly growing public employee retirement costs weigh heavily on the 2017-18 state budget now being fashioned, but their impact is only partially revealed in budget documents.



Dan Walters

Gov. Jerry Brown's proposed budget does tell us that the state has \$205.9 billion in "unfunded liabilities" for pensions and health care for state and University of California employees and adds, "These retirement liabilities have grown by \$51 billion in the last year alone due to poor investment returns

and the adoption of more realistic assumptions about future earnings.”

The budget also reveals that the state’s mandatory “contributions” to the California Public Employees’ Retirement System “are on track to nearly double from \$5.8 billion ... in 2017-18 to \$9.2 billion ... in 2023-24.”

Read the whole story

Letter: Homeless coalition appreciative of support

To the community,

On behalf of the Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless (TCH), I would like to thank our community for your support through the second winter of the South Lake Tahoe warm oom project. Our organization received donations from over 200 different individuals and businesses, and benefited from over 60 volunteers who provided over 1,600 volunteer hours.

In our second winter, we were open every night from Dec. 15 through April 30. We provided 3,741 shelter bed nights and averaged 27 guests per night. The majority of our guests are local – 87 percent reported living or working in the South Lake Tahoe area prior to becoming homeless. Twenty-six percent of our guests were employed at the time they entered the warm room.

The success of this program is reliant on the collaboration of donations from our generous community. Special thanks to El Dorado Community Foundation, Reliapro Painters, Caesars

Foundation, South Lake Tahoe Endowment, and many more for their financial support. We are grateful for partnerships with the South Lake Tahoe City Council, South Lake Tahoe Police Department, Barton Health, Darke Marketing, El Dorado County Services, Live Violence Free, Naji Raad & Family, Only Kindness, South Tahoe Refuse, St. Theresa Catholic Church, Tahoe Youth & Family Services, Temple Bat Yam, and Unity at the Lake. Our supporters are too numerous to name ,but we do appreciate all of your support in opening and operating our area's first overnight emergency winter shelter.

In order to promote more awareness about individuals experiencing homelessness, Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless is planning an educational event, Faces of Homelessness, on Oct. 26 at Valhalla Tahoe.

TCH is a 501(c)3 charitable organization. Our mission is to meet the needs of our neighbors experiencing homelessness by providing warm beds and promoting community awareness. Donations are welcomed to aid in funding the warm room 2017-18 season. Checks can be made payable Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless and mailed to P0 Box 13514, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96151. Donations can also be made on our **website**.

Marissa Muscat, TCH

Opinion: A healthier Lake Tahoe community

By Clint Purvance

This week, June 4-10, is Community Health Improvement Week. It is a national celebration to recognize the work and efforts of

health professionals to improve their community's health.

One thing you will hear from Barton Health professionals is that improving the health and wellness in our community takes collaboration and commitment. This can be seen in the actions taken in the last two years to address South Lake Tahoe's most pressing health concerns.



Clint Purvance

The top three concerns identified in the 2012 and 2015 Community Health Needs Assessment were mental health, substance abuse, and access to care issues. This assessment, one of the requirements from the Affordable Care Act, is not only a comprehensive report, but also an action plan to help our community members who need it most.

Here are some of the highlights of progress:

Access to Care – Two-Year Highlights

- Expanded the Barton physician directory to include community health resources.
- Increased the number of Mommy & Me classes and Daddy Bootcamp classes offered to new parents.
- Expanded Barton Community Health Center hours to include same day appointments and Saturday availability.
- Through the UC Davis Cancer Care Network and in collaboration with the Gene Upshaw Memorial Tahoe Forest Cancer Center, patients have access to state-of-the-art oncology care coordinated through Barton oncology.
- Barton Foundation funded the Barton Cancer Wellness

Program for community members undergoing cancer offering guided exercise, yoga, and nutrition services.

- Developed an innovative partnership with the U.S. Forest Service to serve patients through guided walks with medical providers on public lands. Increased our commitment to women's health by hiring three female OB/Gyns and starting construction on Barton Medical Imaging's Women's Suite adding advanced technology, including a 3D Tomography mammography system improving accuracies in diagnostics.
- Barton Foundation provided \$8,000 in grants to local nonprofit organizations to improve processes and access to care.

Mental Health – Two-Year Highlights

- Hired a full time adult and child psychiatrist providing services at Barton Psychiatry and Barton Community Health Center.
- Barton Foundation provided \$47,000 in grants for local nonprofit organizations serving people with mental health needs.
- Conducted two mental health presentations with psychiatrists.
- Hosted two community forums on mental health needs in our community with an attendance of over 75 community members at each forum.
- Developed the Community Mental & Behavioral Health Cooperative in an effort to increase awareness, reduce stigma and improve access to mental health services.
- In cooperation with the city of South Lake Tahoe proclaimed May as Mental Health Awareness Month in 2016 and 2017.
- Created an annual 31 day Mental Health Challenge during the month of May increasing awareness and reducing stigma.
- Introduced five mental health kiosks to the community

providing mental health information and resources through the Community Mental & Behavioral Health Cooperative.

- Implemented a Survivors of Suicide support group through the Suicide Prevention Network meant to help those who have lost a loved one to suicide.
- Educated 7th-, 8th- and 9th-grade students in spring 2017 on “signs of suicide.”

Substance Abuse – Two-Year Highlights

- Participated in the annual Drug Store Project impacting 6th-grade students.
- Attended South Tahoe Drug-Free Coalition meetings and Pain Management meetings.
- Implemented education and monitoring programs of Barton providers on drug-prescribing practices.
- Barton Foundation donated \$23,000 to nonprofits with the goal of reducing substance abuse in our community.
- Hosted two community lectures on opioid use and abuse.
- Provided medical expertise for the Tahoe Regional Young Professional’s Tahoe Hall Talk on cannabis.
- Presentation to STHS freshmen class on the effects of cannabis.
- Hosted a Drug Take Back Day through the Drug Free Coalition.
- Presented medical point of view on cannabis risks to the South Lake Tahoe City Council.
- Engaged local community pharmacies in collaboration efforts for prescription drug monitoring.

While as a community we are making progress, significant collaboration and work need to continue. Barton is committed to lead the charge in many of these efforts, but cannot achieve these goals alone. We have immense gratitude for the commitment of the partners involved in this effort, and look forward to together creating a healthier community.

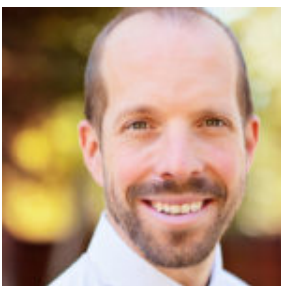
Community Health Improvement Week is put on by the American Hospital Association's Association for Community Health Improvement. For a complete report of Barton Health's 2015 Community Health Needs Assessment, go **online**.

Clint Purvance is the CEO and president of Barton Health in South Lake Tahoe.

Opinion: We can make a difference post-Paris accord

By Nick Exline

On June 1, as I watched President Trump announce that his administration would be pulling the United States out of the Paris Climate Accord, I couldn't help but reflect on President Ronald Reagan's farewell address to the nation in which he imparted, for the final time as president, his vision that the United States is the world's shining "light on a hill."



Nick Exline

These words rang in my mind because with this withdrawal the United States now joins Syria and Nicaragua as the only three nations on earth not to sign onto the accord. Nicaragua didn't sign because they believed the accord did not go far enough.

Abandoning the Paris Climate Accord is counter to the collective voices of 194 nations on earth, all recognized scientific institutions, our universities, our religious leaders, our military, our businesses large and small, and our citizenry who overwhelmingly supported staying in the Paris Climate Accord. From a purely economic growth stand point it is difficult to ascertain why the United States would turn its back on a \$6 trillion renewable energy growth industry whose job forecasts exceed all other sectors. Why would we cede these jobs of the future to our competitors?

It was difficult for me to see how this withdrawal could co-exist with Reagan's vision of the United States as the world's indispensable nation, the world's "light on a hill." It suddenly occurred to me that when Reagan referred to the United States as the "light on the hill" he was not stating that he the president, the actions of our government or our military were the light, but rather that as a result of the tireless efforts of the American people to stand up for what's right and just, that we the American people, are the light.

In that vein I am more optimistic than ever that we will meet and exceed what is required to address the defining issue of our time, climate change. We must divorce ourselves of the notion that a politician or technological innovation is going to come and save us in the nick of time. We must all grab the wheel of history and become the leaders necessary to create a world of which we can all be proud to leave to our children.

Working to have the city of South Lake Tahoe commit to 100 percent renewable electricity was not an effort of us vs. them, but an effort of we. We as a community came together to demand that our homes and businesses be lighted by renewable electricity. We came together to say that not only is renewable electricity the economically wise decision, but we understand that climate change is diminishing our snow pack and impacting the clarity of our lake and we will take a stand.

My optimism is rooted in the understanding that together we can accomplish anything. In the coming months we will work with many partners to push this 100 percent renewable commitment to more cities and counties beyond South Lake Tahoe's borders and we will need your help.

In the end I am optimistic because I understand as we grab the wheel of history, and tirelessly work toward bringing about positive change, that we are in fact the "light on the hill" and our brightest hour is on the horizon.

I look forward to working with each and everyone one of you during these exciting times and please contact me if you would like to get involved in this positive change because we are all in this together.

Nick Exline is chair of the South Lake Tahoe 100% Renewable Committee.

Letter: Ex-director defends EDC senior services

Publisher's note: The following email was sent to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors on May 18 from John Litwinovich, El Dorado County Community Services-Human Services Department director from 1982-2007.

Dear members of the board,

Three years ago I sent your board a message regarding our county's senior services. In light of current fiscal challenges, I am resending it. The background information on Community Services is important for budget discussions, as is

the fact that you do have options for reducing costs and strengthening services.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions. Thank you.

John Litwinovich

December 12, 2014

Members of the board,

During challenging budgetary times, talk of austerity measures and cuts in services are the norm. As you are a board in transition facing such challenges, the following is a brief history and some thoughts on Community Services, your vitally important safety net for seniors.

Our county's senior programs, among the best in California, were developed over four decades. Prior board members, including Dub Walker, Bob Dorr, Pat Lowe, John Upton, Jack Sweeney ... indeed all of your predecessors to varying degrees ... worked before you to build the compassionate, efficient countywide service delivery system that you now support. Millions of senior nutrition meals have been served, thousands of at risk elders have been protected through senior legal services, tens of thousands have been assisted by housing programs, utility bill support, home weatherization, senior day care and a host of other services that help seniors remain healthy, independent and in their own homes.

Few things the county does touch as many lives in such meaningful ways on an ongoing basis. And at the heart of every effort have been the staff and volunteers of Community Services, some of your most dedicated, knowledgeable and hard working employees and community members.

Thirty-five years ago, the Board of Supervisors took steps to

ensure resources went directly into services. Instead of accepting a future under the Sacramento Regional Area Agency on Aging, and instead of contracting out with other entities, the board fought for autonomy and local control, reducing three potential administrative layers to one, and created our own direct service Area Agency on Aging.

In 1982, again placing seniors first, the board reaffirmed its commitment to having services provided by county employees. Two decades later, El Dorado County was at the forefront in the writing and passage of state legislation to ensure local control throughout California for federal energy assistance and other resources so vital to elders.

Over time, board members, staff and volunteers worked not only to expand service sites, but to build community facilities to better serve our residents.

That's four decades of building something very special, placing our elders first, in a caring, compassionate and cost-effective manner.

Times change. While the inspiration of wonderful advocates from the past like Moni Gilmore and Genevieve Stirnman lives on, new, well-intentioned folks are arriving with their own ideas. For your sake, and theirs, the following are suggestions regarding senior services, both missteps to avoid and good measures to embrace.

Do not fall for the argument that someone else can or will provide these services better, more efficiently, or even less expensively. Audits and studies have shown our programs are run very efficiently with excellent quality services. Perhaps alternative providers may be found who might, in the short run, do something remotely comparable on the cheap. Hopefully, no one will propose replacing our excellent senior services delivery system with something less.

Do not fall for the misguided argument that senior programs

place the county at risk, and thus should be contracted out to reduce that risk. Obviously, the county already accepts much higher risks in providing other services. However, more importantly, each year there are thousands of elders in our county who are at risk of abuse, exploitation, hunger, isolation and a host of other challenges addressed by senior legal, nutrition and other programs. Does county government exist to serve and protect its citizens, or simply to serve and diminish risks to itself? Beware of anyone who advocates for the latter.

Do not fall for the argument that the only way to meet budget goals is to cut or contract out vital services. This is not so, as explained below.

If you have not done so already, go and visit Community Services. Meet the front line senior nutrition staff, volunteers and, most importantly, the elders being served. Tag along with a volunteer on their home delivered meal route and see who's being helped. Talk with the senior legal staff and learn about the wide range of cases and the tremendous impact this service has for at risk elders. Visit senior day care and meet the participants. Every place you go, talk with the staff, the volunteers and the service recipients. Become an advocate in continuing to strengthen the service system.

If you hear that the programs are too expensive to operate, begin (and end) by asking how much is being spent on administrative overhead. The programs themselves are primarily federally and state funded, substantially supplemented by donations, fees and county support. Direct service staff are paid modestly and minor adjustments in service levels have always been made in response to board priorities and fluctuations in funding.

Unfortunately, in recent years, especially with the development of a super agency structure, administrative overhead has gone through the roof. Historically, Community

Services functioned best with a small team of involved administrators who knew the programs, the staff, the volunteers and the service recipients. There were few layers of bureaucracy and little duplication of effort. Services were driven by senior needs rather than institutional needs. Current fiscal challenges are due not to direct service staff, who remain as capable and dedicated as ever, but to a top heavy and costly administrative structure. Again, it comes down to weighing the needs of citizens versus the perceived needs of a very substantial county and agency administrative structure. You do have a choice.

Begin with the premise that continuing to strengthen senior services, rather than beginning to dismantle them, is an administrative rather than a personnel challenge. In Community Services, you have fine employees from the lowest paid staff to the agency director. Perhaps there are untried ways of substantially reducing overhead in the current organizational structure. If not, Community Services needs to be allowed to again thrive on its own as a separate, thrifty department. In either case, our county's seniors need your continued support and commitment to maintaining services.

In Community Services you have been entrusted with something special, a true gem among the many fine departments of county government. Please oversee it carefully, as our seniors are depending on you.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

**John Litwinovich, Community Services-Human Services Department
director 1982-2007**

Letter: EDC takes issue with column

To the community,

Re: Seniors get shaft in EDC budget (**Opinion, June 1, 2017**), the following misleading information presented as fact must be put right.

Paragraph 1: “....a program that is funded about 65 percent by the county, and by about 35 percent private donations and a small federal government grant.”

Clarification: Senior Legal receives approximately \$80,000 in donations each year and approximately \$250,000 in general fund money.

Paragraph 2: “This program provides direct legal services to seniors in landlord/tenant issues/estate questions/elder abuse/long-term care planning and protecting seniors from being taken advantage of. The service is now offered without charge.”

Clarification: Information that is relevant but not included is that these services are provided without any verification of the individual’s ability to pay for the services. Data relative to the income of senior legal clients has been requested, but not provided, and due to attorney client privilege, even if this information is available, county administration is unable to access the information directly. Taxpayer money may well be going to fund free legal services to wealthy seniors who are able to pay.

Paragraph 3: “....there are no position cuts to county administration.”

Correction: The recommended budget includes a net county cost reduction of approximately 8.2 percent within the general government functional group, which is primarily county

administration. In addition, many high level administrative positions in the Community Development Agency, including the CDA director, assistant director of finance and administration, administrative secretary, administrative services officer and senior department analyst, have been cut from the budget, with all of the work being absorbed by other staff. The Chief Administrative Office is absorbing most of this work without any increases to net county cost.

Paragraph 5: "The programs that provide direct service to clients are the first ones to have their budgets reduced or cut, while overhead costs to these programs continually go up, often due to increased administrative costs."

Clarification: In FY 2014-15, shortly after the creation of the Health and Human Services Agency, the administrative overhead rate was 36 percent. This rate has declined the last several years and in the fiscal year 2017-18 recommended budget it is 27 percent, a 9 percent decrease.

Paragraph 8: "At this point, adding administrative positions is a mistake. The costly creation of agency level administrative positions is a principal reason senior services are in jeopardy."

Clarification: The Health and Human Services Agency is adding an assistant director of administration and finance position, but deleting a chief assistant director position. The salaries of each position are identical so there is no increase to the budget. Instead it is simply replacing one executive level administrative position that had a clinical focus, with an executive level finance position due to the complexity of the funding streams in HHSA and to better compliment (sic) the skill set of the director.

Carla Hass, El Dorado County public information officer