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TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES REAUTHORIZATION

REQUESTED ACTIONS: Reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program to restore and enhance state and county flexibility to tailor work and support services that move families into self-sufficiency based on their unique needs. Additionally, support provisions aimed at maintaining the overall work focus of the program in recognition that “work first” does not mean “work only.”

CSAC also supports a permanent authorization and appropriation of funding for TANF subsidized employment programs. In addition, the next reauthorization bill should measure states’ performance in a fair and comprehensive manner that recognizes multiple potential positive outcomes for families.

BACKGROUND: As part of the tax extenders bill (PL 112-096) adopted in February, Congress approved a short-term TANF extension that runs through September 30, 2012. The legislation includes a provision already implemented in California that prohibits ATM’s in adult entertainment venues from dispensing CalWORKS cash benefits.

For its part, the Obama administration did not recommend any specific policy proposals for TANF reauthorization as part of its fiscal year 2013 budget request. Instead, the administration indicated its intention to work with Congress to strengthen the program’s effectiveness in accomplishing its goals. The administration also wants to ensure that states have the flexibility to engage recipients in the most effective activities to promote success in the workforce – including families with serious barriers to employment.

On Capitol Hill, the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources held a reauthorization hearing last fall. CSAC submitted a statement for the hearing record. No further hearings have been scheduled to date.

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