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NextGen Policy Applauds Governor Newsom’s Revisions to California Budget as Critical Step Toward Progress

Governor Newsom’s May revision prioritizes delivering economic relief, assisting renters, mental health support, and protecting communities from the impacts of climate change.

SACRAMENTO – Today, Governor Newsom released his revisions to the 2022-2023 state budget proposal submitted to the Legislature in January. Amid an unprecedented budget surplus, the Governor has prioritized funding toward economic relief, assistance for renters, expanding mental health services and prioritizing response to the climate crisis among many other critical investments.

Statement from NextGen Policy Executive Director, Arnold Sowell Jr.:

“California’s state budget is the most effective policy tool we have to advance justice and equity as it allows us to immediately target and fund solutions to the many challenges facing our state. The investments outlined today by Governor Newsom are the critical components necessary to combat the long-existing social, racial, and economic inequities that continue to plague our most vulnerable communities,” **Sowell said**. “With a historic budget surplus, California has an extraordinary opportunity to make significant progress on the issues of climate change, food insecurity, economic prosperity, affordable housing, higher education, healthcare and equity across the board. Our leaders must allocate every dollar with the urgency that the challenges of today, and of our near future, demand.”

NextGen Policy calls on the state Legislature to secure the following minimum investments:

- **Broadband** — \$25 million to establish a statewide Digital Corps to address digital literacy in California communities most impacted by the digital divide.
- **Climate** — \$47 billion to enact the Governor’s proposed Climate Budget – funding to quickly and equitably reduce greenhouse gas emissions with investments in electric vehicles, transit and safe routes for walking and biking, renewable energy projects, deploying clean energy to heat homes and businesses, and reducing catastrophic wildfires and drought conditions.
- **Food Insecurity** — \$1.13 billion to implement a portfolio of healthy food and hunger prevention programs related to school meals, and farm to school activities which will ensure children are fed healthy, local meals as well as the additional newly proposed investments of \$611 million for procurement funds for school nutrition departments and \$45 million for the Healthy Schools Pathway Program, a workforce training pipeline pilot program for school food service workers.

- Food Insecurity — \$60 million over three years to create a grant program to improve EBT access at California farmers' markets, removing barriers for low-income Californians to gain access to affordable and nutritious foods.
- Higher Education — \$30 million to expand the student loan outreach campaign at the California Department of Financial Protection and Innovation (DFPI) to combat predatory student loan practices.
- Higher Education — \$315 million to implement the Cal Grant Equity Framework which reforms and streamlines the existing Cal Grant financial aid system making higher education more affordable.
- Healthcare — \$820 million to expand healthcare coverage to all income-eligible immigrants in California regardless of age or immigration status.
- Equity — \$40 million to create and staff the Office of Racial Equity which will help establish and implement a statewide framework to put CA on a path to reform policies and programs that continue to perpetuate systemic inequities.
- Veterans — \$50 million to establish the California Veterans Health Initiative (CVHI) to address the epidemic of veteran suicide by focusing on prevention through early intervention and direct services, including culturally competent mental health services.
- Mental Health — \$290 million one-time investments to implement a multi-pronged approach to address the urgent youth mental health crisis.

NextGen Policy is committed to working with the Newsom Administration, the State Legislature, and our diverse coalition of partners, to seize this unique opportunity to truly raise the bar on progress by securing a final budget package that promises to deliver a prosperous and equitable future for all Californians.

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The mission of NextGen Policy and NextGen California is to fight for progressive policy change to address environmental, social, racial, gender, and economic inequities in California through justice-centered legislative advocacy, grassroots partnerships, and democratic civic engagement.