

March 23, 2010

Honorable Mariko Yamada  
Assembly Aging & Long-Term Care Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 360A  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Support for AB 2114 (Beall)**

Executive Committee:

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*Vice Chair, Finance*  
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*Directors Emeritus*  
Susan Boyle  
Anne De Meules Myers

*President and CEO*  
Paul Downey

Dear Assemblymember Yamada:

Senior Community Centers of San Diego strongly supports **AB 2114**, which would require the use of the Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index (Elder Index) by the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and the California Department of Aging in their four-year local area and state plans.

We provide direct services to almost 2,000 very low-income elderly each day in San Diego County. All of our clients, who struggle to have their basic needs met, fall below the Elder Index. We see the devastating impact that poverty can have on both their physical and mental health.

AB 2114 would provide local planners and legislators with a critical planning tool. By using the Elder Index consistently, California's AAAs can eliminate costly independent research, can streamline the measurement process, and can use resources more effectively.

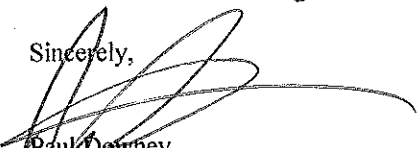
Policymakers strive to create effective policies to promote economic security for seniors, but they do not have an accurate picture of the resources needed to make ends meet in today's economy. Policymakers typically determine income thresholds using the Federal Poverty Guidelines (commonly known as the FPL), which is an antiquated measure based *solely* on the cost of a bare-bones food diet. Furthermore, it does not account for geographic variations in the cost of living.

California's 33 AAAs currently use a variety of costly tools to measure economic need, spend significant resources doing independent research to calculate measures such as median income and housing prices, and have no standardized data system.

The Elder Index reflects the true cost of meeting basic needs, including expenses associated with transportation, health care, and housing. The Index also illustrates variations in cost of living by county. It sets a new benchmark of income adequacy to help develop policies and programs that are based on accurate assessments of elder needs. Using the index allows planners to save time and money on redundant research and to better utilize scarce resources for senior services.

AB 2114 is an important step in planning for our state's seniors in a period of great fiscal challenges. By enacting AB 2114, you would be setting the foundation to plan efficiently and appropriately for California seniors and demonstrating California's leadership in setting visionary policies.

Sincerely,

  
Paul Downey  
President/CEO

Cc: Frances Chacon, Legislative Staffer for Assemblymember Beall (Fax: 916-319-2189)  
Cc: Mary Bellamy, Republican Policy Consultant (Fax 916.319.3902)