



Welcome, dnlma [Edit Account](#) [Log Out](#) [Customer Service](#) [E-Bee](#) [Subscribe to The Bee](#)

[Press Club Win Summer Arts tickets](#)

Senior meals program latest victim of state budget mess

We are in a tough time; shared sacrifice should guide budget actions.

07/10/08 18:49:09

No one wants to see seniors go hungry, yet state budget cuts will limit the number of home-delivered meals provided to the elderly in Fresno, Madera, Kings and Tulare counties. We wring our hands, and say that service must be a priority for government.

Then we hear teachers say the state can't cut funding to schools, and police officers and firefighters say they can't take cuts to their budgets and keep us safe. Social services agencies say if they are forced to reduce their budgets, the most vulnerable of our citizens will suffer. Other groups say the state will collapse if they are targeted for funding reductions.

And that's the reason California has a \$15.2 billion budget deficit. No program can be cut, even when there isn't enough money to pay the state's bills. So we are 11 days into a new budget year, and California doesn't have a budget, and our leaders are paralyzed to act.

The story in The Bee about the reduced funding for seniors getting home-delivered meals caught our eye. We believe that is a service that must continue. But where to cut? We also support adequate funding for our schools, public safety agencies and social services.

Here's where we part company with the advocates of those groups. We can't believe there isn't any waste in our public schools. That should be eliminated in this difficult budget time. We can't believe that police and fire agencies are operating with complete efficiency. Plug the coverage gaps by eliminating county islands and a mish-mash of costly fire districts. We can't believe there aren't wasteful social services program. Save money by smoothing out procedures that burn up public dollars that could help those who really need services.

We are in a tough time, and shared sacrifice should guide our budget actions. That means small cuts for schools, public safety and social services. There should be big cuts for programs such as the state prison system, which may be the most inefficient government agency California has ever seen. It's also time to rein in exorbitant public-employee salaries.

The Democrats say increase taxes by \$8 billion and everything will be fine. They are wrong. The Republicans say we can get out of this mess exclusively through spending cuts. They are wrong.

The state needs a small number of targeted revenue increases. Close tax loopholes. Increase income taxes slightly on the state's highest earners. Extend the sales tax to areas currently exempt.

California can't get out of the budget mess easily, and there will be pain. It's time for the Democrats, Republicans and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to compromise on a package of program cuts and revenue increases. The extreme positions in the Legislature have led to gridlock.

Doing nothing has made senior-meals programs vulnerable. We must be better than what we've shown in the past few years. The Golden State has become a state of finger-pointers, and that's never solved a problem.

Tell us what you think. Comment on this editorial by going to <http://www.fresnobee.com/opinion>, then click on the editorial.

[Search Archives](#), or

[Search News](#) Web Search powered by **YAHOO! SEARCH**

[News](#) [Sports](#) [Business](#) [Life](#) [Entertainment](#) [Calendar](#) [Blogs](#) [Opinion](#) [Obits](#) [Classifieds](#) [Cars](#) [Homes](#) [Jobs](#) [Shopping](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [Text Only](#) | [Site Map](#) | [RSS](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Advertise](#)

[FresnoBee.com](#) | [ClovisIndependent.com](#) | [VidaEnElValle.com](#) | [SierraStar.com](#) | [CentralValley.com](#) | [FresnoFamous.com](#)

© Copyright 2008 The Fresno Bee | [Help](#) | [Your Privacy](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Child Protection](#)

