

## Fresno rally aims at state cuts in social services

By Eddie Jimenez - The Fresno Bee

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About 60 people protested Tuesday in downtown Fresno against \$2.5 billion in planned cuts to state health and social services, saying Gov. Jerry Brown should increase state tax revenues rather than target assistance to children, the disabled and the elderly.

The protesters at the noon rally in front of the Hugh M. Burns state building said the proposed budget cuts would squeeze those who rely on in-home care and parents who need child-care subsidies to continue working.

Brown and state lawmakers should raise taxes on people and companies that make the most money, such as oil producers, said Kevin Hamilton, deputy chief of programs for Clinica Sierra Vista, which provides health care and health education services.

Hamilton urged protesters to contact lawmakers about the proposed cuts that would harm the most vulnerable people in the state.

"We need to let them know how we feel," he said. "Their phones should ring off the hook. Their Internet should be flooded with emails. It should be crashing every day."

Sharon Esquivel, a licensed child care provider for more than 20 years, said she has seen families benefit from the financial help.

"These are people who are trying to better themselves, and these subsidized programs are helping them to do that," she said.

Anna Jones, a single mother of two young boys, worries the loss of state money to help pay for child care could force her to quit her Internal Revenue Service job. Jones said she was on welfare for six years before being hired at the IRS three years ago.

"Please don't cut child care and health care," she said. "I don't want to go back on welfare."

The Fresno rally was one of four around the state Tuesday to protest the proposed cuts. The others were in Los Angeles, San Bernardino and San Francisco.