



# News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

## **Social Security Commissioner Astrue Calls for Prompt State Assembly Passage of Bill Ending Furloughs of Federally-Funded State Employees**

### **Asks Governor to Withdraw Veto Threat and Not Appeal Lawsuit**

Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security, today called for the California State Assembly to quickly pass Senate Bill 29. This bill, which already has passed the State Senate, would end the practice of furloughing Federally-funded state employees, a practice recently held to be illegal by a California superior court judge.

About 1,500 employees in this category are responsible for reviewing applications for Social Security disability benefits in California. California's taxpayers, state employees, and disability applicants all are harmed by these furloughs, and no one benefits. Each furlough day costs the state about \$850,000 in administrative reimbursements and delays the payment of over \$420,000 in much needed Social Security benefits to residents' with disabilities.

"Furloughing disability examiners is incomprehensible under any circumstances, and it is callous in a recession of this magnitude," Commissioner Astrue stated. "Congress authorized half a billion dollars under the Recovery Act to hire staff to reduce disability backlogs, and California is thwarting Congress by unilaterally reducing staffing in a punitive way that also hurts the State's coffers."

"It is time for Governor Schwarzenegger to renounce his failed furlough policy by withdrawing his veto threat of Senator Steinberg's Bill 29 and by declining to appeal the decision in the furlough lawsuit. Fairness, compassion, and common sense all require that result."

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