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Transcript

July 2, 2025, 1:30PM

CA

Claudia P. Alarcon 0:04

Just an announcement for those at home and anybody in the room. This meeting is being transcribed.

SE

Shuster, Elizabeth 0:05

Anthony's there solo?

MK

Maral Karaccusian 0:09

Monica's there too. So is erlinda.

EB

Erlinda Bernardo 1:00

Can you hear me?

Can you hear me?

Can you hear me?

Can you hear me?

CA

Claudia P. Alarcon 2:18

Yes, we can hear you.

R1

Room 140 2:18

Yes.

MI

Michael Sylvester II 2:21

Yes, but there's an echo.

R1 Room 140 2:46

Let me do this.

Let me do this.

Let me do this.

You guys hear us now?

Whereas now.

MK Maral Karaccusian 2:53

Yes.

R1 Room 140 2:53

Yes. OK, great.

Hi everyone, it's Monica with SC5.

We started with a call to order and I apologize.

We were having some technical difficulties in this room, which have been going on all day.

Unfortunately, we did introduce all the offices. SD1234 is morale and five is myself.

I don't wanna.

Labor the point we'll move on to consent.

We have no consent. We'll move on to motions.

SD.

One SD4 advancing opportunity and nutrition restaurant meals program.

I'll make this very brief and thank you to Dpss and DEO for being here today.

And thank you to SD4 and moral for Co authoring this motion.

The inspiration for this motion came actually out of an event that was held in SD in SD1 with LEAF, the economic mobility program.

We were approached then that there were restaurant owners who were talking about how their industry was struggling and didn't feel that they they're looking for.

For solutions they realize.

You know what?

We could be connected better to the restaurant meals program.

Hence, drafting this motion as we know the state is supposed to take over the administration of the restaurant meals program, but it's currently admissible by dpss and sort of in this kind of shared middle ground.

So in the interim, while we're still heading over some of these mousings, that nature of the state, we thought it would be a good opportunity for dpss to partner with the EO and really raise awareness for a struggling restaurant industry to maybe take advantage of another.

Potential opportunity here to take part in the restaurant bills program and also.

So then expand customers ability to access more restaurants through their EBT benefits. And I'm joined by my colleague Annette as well. I think she'd like to add, but that is the overall purpose of the motion.

So the directive thus moves dpss to work with DEO to identify strategies to raise awareness of this program, especially targeting those areas and restaurants that were impacted by a lot of the more high profile incidents we've seen, like the wildfires, like the immigration enforcement.

Collaborating with Cbo's to assist those who are potentially.

More vulnerable, like people who are older adults, people with disabilities, and then report back in writing in 90 days. And as this does transition to the state, however long that may take advocacy strategies that the state may continue this work, I don't know if you can assess or.

Do you would like to add anything to that?

Sure. Nick Ippolito dpss.

In operating the restaurant meals program Heldly for 20 years, it was, it was first.

Taken advantage of on on a motion by Supervisor Burke back in in 2005.

And I mean the numbers kind of speak for themselves. We have 2300 restaurants across the county.

That participate in the restaurant meals program and there's at least 26,000 or more restaurants.

Across the county that that, that we have total.

So there's obviously a lot of room for growth in this in this program.

I'm really happy to to, to collaborate with the EO on this. We had we had a lot of success on collaborating in terms of outreach to businesses with our skimming campaign EBT skimming campaign. They have. They have the language, the the common language, how to how to speak.

To businesses how to speak to people that are, that are involved with businesses such as Restaurant Association, etc.

To get the word out, to publicize this program.

So really, we're really excited to be together again, working on another good, good

outreach effort and we'll of course report back in 90 days with with the results and and what we're seeing and and the different challenges and hopefully some some advocacy opportunities. If I were to add.

One thing in terms of advocacy efforts to the state and the feds because they work. Program is is overseeing collectively by by both of them. We probably look for opportunities to cut red tape.

You know there's always whenever, whenever.

Businesses work with government agencies.

We always look for the most efficient ways to for for businesses, particularly restaurants and restaurants that are smaller to make it as easy as possible to participate in this program.

So I imagine our advocacy would be around that.

But anyway, really appreciate the motion and we look forward to working.

And the only thing I would add from the Department of Economic Opportunity is I think that there's no hanging fruit actually in terms of outreach for this. Obviously, as coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, he ran the economic Opportunity grant program. But within that was.

A targeted grant program called Key valet dining.

And so we have thousands of businesses that.

Shared impacts of COVID-19 that we can target through the LA region small Business Relief Fund.

That we just launched in the last six months.

Lots of restaurants and food establishments in there or other nonprofits that might qualify for this program that we can target together.

And then as we're launching the shop local dine local recover campaign for Altadena and the other fire impacted areas, we can also build it into that campaign because there's gonna be a component focused on.

Food establishments, and so those are.

Those are areas where we'd start, but I do look forward to working with dpss on just like your your.

Expertise on how to support businesses that are of the 23 that are 2300 that are participating so that we can cross train our office of small business and some of our business develop organizations on how best to get folks on board.

So if we can work together on some of that technical assistance.

I think that would be great, but look forward to this opportunity.

I think it's a great opportunity for for restaurants to encourage new customers and I see that our coauthor's office has.

MK **Maral Karaccusian** 8:51

Yeah.

Hi. Sorry, just a couple things.

One is aging and disabilities through the California Department of Aging through Cares Act it so Kelly, are you partnered with Aging and disabilities to see what restaurants did that program to?

R1 **Room 140** 8:56

No.

MK **Maral Karaccusian** 9:05

Are they all plugged in during COVID-19 OK.

R1 **Room 140** 9:05

Hi.

Not yet, but.

Not yet, but thanks marl.

We will.

That's all offline on that. Here we are.

MK **Maral Karaccusian** 9:11

OK.

The Yeah, the other thing too is like in the restaurants that have been approved.

Do we have an inventory or are we tracking how many restaurants have closed?

R1 **Room 140** 9:23

Of the of the restaurants that participated, RMP, how many have closed?

MK **Maral Karaccusian** 9:27

Yeah.

It.

R1 Room 140 9:30

I we we'd have to.

I don't if we track that, but I don't know if I'd have to find out.

MK Maral Karaccusian 9:35

I'd be curious in our current climate, if we're gonna start seeing restaurants like as much as we wanna increase, I don't wanna be negative Nelly here, but I'd be curious to see how many restaurants and that would be important to inform the board of how many of these.

Restaurants that were approved are are maybe no longer in business.

I'm kind of just forecasting over the next six months to a year.

R1 Room 140 9:53

I'll see if we track that.

MK Maral Karaccusian 9:55

Thanks.

R1 Room 140 9:57

Any questions from the deputies on this motion?

Yeah, mine was centered around.

There's. Is there any way that I mean why isn't everyone in this? Like, are you tracking it? Like if I was a restaurant owner and this is something that, you know, I would love to participate.

So is there a lot of red tape and as far as getting ineligible to be enrolled in it, the way it works right now and as as Anthony referred to, it's it's, it's a bit of a, it's a bit of a hybrid.

Right now, in terms of oversight.

If I'm a restaurant and I'm interested in participating in this program, I have to. I have to go to Cdss Web page and and enroll in DPSS handles the MOU and all the necessary paperwork.

And so we have we handle the MOU portion of it.

We keep that as we we try to keep that as lean and mean as possible and as streamlined as possible.

But you know, if you're, if you have to register with the state.
And then get ping pong down to us to do an MO UI mean that just invites potential potential difficulties.
I don't know.
I haven't heard of any instances where people are are turned off by that, if you will.
I just don't think they know about it.
Well, I think it's more of AI think it's more of a knowledge issue than it is anything that is one of the intents of the motion is to raise the awareness for it, OK.
Any other questions from deputies?
Quest.

CT **Caroline Torosis** 11:28
I I have a question.

R1 **Room 140** 11:30
Singer, Laurel.
So that Caroline Carol. Yes.

CT **Caroline Torosis** 11:32
Oh, I have a question, Carolyn.
Everyone so quick quick question.
I think this is great.
I obviously remember what we all did during COVID.
I agree with moral I think that aging and disabilities had like a pretty robust roster as well. However, we wrote canvassing our our business corridors on Friday and there are a lot of restaurants that are immigrant owned who are deeply terrified.
In many of these areas.
For raids have happened and some of the Russian owners themselves are undocumented.
Is there a possibility or a way, especially in business quarters or business has been decimated to actually connect with those business owners and and buy meals from them because of the economic impact that the immigration activities have had? And is there a willingness to work with undocumented restaur?
Owners.

R1 Room 140 12:31

So.

MK Maral Karaccusian 12:31

I also can I just.

Can I just say one thing too?

Like with all the snap cuts that are being proposed like this is also gonna have impact, right?

Like so, I think we also have to have a direct conversation.

Sorry, Carolyn, what you reminded me is like it's decimating it.

But if we're gonna have snap reduction, that means EBT is gonna get reduced, right?

CT Caroline Torosis 12:45

Yeah.

MK Maral Karaccusian 12:48

So like less people are gonna have less money in their pocket to go support businesses.

So I think we just also have to be mindful of that.

CT Caroline Torosis 12:53

I mean, all, all of those things.

Plus also, if you're preparing meals in the back of the house, you're not out there.

You're delivering meals, you're potentially less susceptible to immigration activity.

Perhaps we can get workers.

You know, making some some earnings as well.

Sorry not to over complicate this.

R1 Room 140 13:12

So I'll I'll Caroline's questions 1st and then I'll go to maral's question.

In terms of you mentioned buying buying meals, you mean would we just in terms of those businesses that you mentioned along the corridor enrolling them you know just doing direct outreach to enroll these enroll them into the restaurant

management restaurant meal program so?
Our customers could utilize their card for that purpose.

CT **Caroline Torosis** 13:43

Both also, are we thinking about like actually purchasing meals and delivering them because some people are not leaving their homes?

R1 **Room 140** 13:43

No.

Yeah, I.

So they do. So the restaurant meal program does does make it possible for meals to be delivered.

The problem is that the Cal fresh benefit doesn't pay for the delivery portion of it.

CT **Caroline Torosis** 14:10

Got it.

R1 **Room 140** 14:10

And.

CT **Caroline Torosis** 14:13

So we would need to provide some sort of like supplemental funding in order to do that.

So I guess, but I mean I don't know, I think it's like a a graduated approach or but my question does still stand and like how do we support workers and immigrant owned businesses who have been impacted at the same time as helping vulnerable people get access to?

Food because I think there are multitude of issues going on here.

R1 **Room 140** 14:38

Connect to that, Carolyn.

We actually we have another motion.

CT **Caroline Torosis** 14:43

Yeah.

R1 Room 140 14:44

That has been working on with DCP at the business Interruption fund.

CT Caroline Torosis 14:47

Yeah, I know. Yeah.

R1 Room 140 14:49

So that's something that would help.

So these businesses but.

But we were actually we were looking at the delivery initially adding that to to this motion, but then found out that it's not covered but.

CT Caroline Torosis 14:55

I totally get that.

R1 Room 140 15:09

I mean open to discussing opportunities for funding that.

CT Caroline Torosis 15:13

Yeah, no, I applaud what we're trying to do here.

I'm just. I'm not.

I'm not even necessarily critiquing anything. What I am saying though is that I think all of us are aware and I'm just expressing, you know, there was the economic impact motion that you all did.

I'm expressing that like we talked to people first hand.

You know in South LA who are literally have had zero business and we're in month, you know like 6 of this and we got 3 1/2 years to go.

R1 Room 140 15:36

Thank you.

CT Caroline Torosis 15:39

So how do we, in addition to giving people cash assistance?

Is there anything that we can do to leverage our systems to at least, you know, be

reaching some of the most vulnerable workers and businesses?

But I I think you are trying to do that.

I just.

I offer that as suggestion and I also agree with Nick. Like maybe you can potentially do outreach to high risk, high need areas to enroll some more restaurants.

I don't know.

Happy to, you know, help in any way.

R1 Room 140 16:10

Yeah, Carolyn, I would say sorry. I I would say that we are definitely in alignment with the sentiment you've expressed with respect to the scope of the motion.

You know, we do have in here the prioritizing businesses that might be more impacted by some of the ongoing immigration enforcement that's explicitly called out.

So I do think we're trying to address that same thing. And as Annette said, we did look at the delivery piece.

It just wasn't within our ability to cover in the program that that if it's a separate conversation outside this motion that we wanna talk about ways to look at, it definitely would be open to that too.

But just with respect to the scope of the motion, that's what we're looking at.

Definitely agree with your sentiment.

MK Maral Karaccusian 16:47

I know I'm gonna do a shameless plug if there's an opportunity to partner with the Office of Food Systems.

You know to have a creative solution.

Maybe there's strategy there to talk to Paula about this piece of it.

R1 Room 140 17:00

Yes.

Lee would agree with that.

And I think, you know, like we were talking about the shop local dine, local recover, local campaign or you know this group talking about targeting like impacted corridors.

I think that is important to get folks to add this revenue generating opportunity for

them, but I do think you know the nature of the current.

Situation like.

There is some sensitivity to how much we're like promoting particular businesses that are already feeling vulnerable.

Any additional questions from the deputies?

We'll move to public comment. Thanks Kelly.

We do.

We have any public comment online or in person?

Singing.

Don't see any. You don't see any?

You do raise your hand.

OK. We're not seeing any little hands.

Great. This meeting is now concluded.

Thank you.

We appreciate your time.

Thanks.

Seeing none, we appreciate everyone joining us today.

- This meeting is now adjourned.

We'll be moving into closed session now.

Erlinda Bernardo stopped transcription