

Fresno Metro Ministry  
1055 N. Van Ness, Suite H  
Fresno, Ca 93728  
559.485.1416  
Fax: 559.485-9109  
[metromin@fresnometmin.org](mailto:metromin@fresnometmin.org)  
[www.fresnometroministry.org](http://www.fresnometroministry.org)

## **Excerpts and Summary of the 29<sup>th</sup> Hunger and Nutrition Forum**

**Wednesday, January 8, 2003 12:00PM –1:30PM**

**Trinity Lutheran Church, Fresno**

**Sponsored by Fresno Metro Ministry**

**Supported by**

**California Dept. of Health Services Cancer Prevention  
and Nutrition Section, by USDA**

**MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger**

**California Food Policy Advocates**

The following is a summary of the reports made at the forum compiled by Edie Jessup and Carey Berend.

## **Focus: Get Ready for 2003: Learning Effective Advocacy Skills for Legislative Issues in a Tough Budget Year**

**Edie Jessup:** Good afternoon. My name is Edie Jessup, and I work for Fresno Metro Ministry with their Community Hunger and Nutrition Project. We welcome you here today for what I think is going to be a really exciting forum. (Packet materials are listed at the end of this Summary). Participants introduced themselves.

I'm very glad that you're here to consider the important kinds of things that we have facing us this particularly difficult budget year. We're hearing at the local level, at the county level, at the state and the federal level about the radical cuts that are going to be made, and I know that in your agencies you're beginning to consider what the impact is going to be on low-income people particularly. Unfortunately, we're also facing the fact that radical cuts have been made in the years previous, and what we know is at the local level – the county, the city level, and with our agencies – is that everyone has already cut back nearly to bare bones. So what is it that we can do and how can we effectively talk to the people that have some power to do something different? How can we talk to them so that they will hear us and so that we can effectively make sure that the people who are most vulnerable are not the people who are most hurt in these difficult times? I'm very happy to have my friend Libby Sholes here from the California Council of Churches, an interfaith and ecumenical organization that works with congregations and denominations throughout the state. Libby works particularly with the Legislature, and she is particularly working around the state with local people and what they can do to advocate effectively in this very, very tough time. Libby will work with us and make this a start of **what we can do effectively together to make a difference here for the folks here in Fresno where the impact of all of the budget cuts seems to be worse than in other places in California.**

**Elizabeth Sholes:** Good afternoon. You have no idea how pleased I am to be here. I am going around the state, but I've been looking forward to this particularly because whether you all know it or not **your reputation precedes you as a community that not only cares about important social issues, particularly around the issue of hunger and nutrition, but you actually do something about it. You have an outstanding reputation statewide for being progressive and for making a**

**difference in the lives of those who really cannot help themselves effectively at this point.** One of the things that has become clear to those of us who have spent most of our lives as what I call 'street fighters' who are actually delivering services, dealing with people directly, we all have a tendency to think that the political process is 1) very alien, and 2) nothing that we do will ever make a difference anyway because it's all the same. There's no distinguishing the parties, there's no distinguishing the rich from the poor. I mean, the rich take care of everything so the poor always get the leftovers if they get anything at all. **So that we have kind of abandoned the political process. And, the problem is that in that abandonment what we have done, and unfortunately very successfully, is to turn the legislative process over to special interest and to extreme groups that have in many cases issues and positions that are very inimical to what we believe in. By reclaiming the political process in conjunction with what we do as service providers we can, I really believe, make a powerful difference.** We need, however, to really know what we're doing. We need to know how to talk to legislators, and we need to know how to really get their language and how to understand what was described to me earlier today as their culture. And obviously everybody is different, but we're going to give a start today, and it is just a start – on how to be more effective in the political arena.

Underneath Edie's wonderful packet are some pages that I've brought. There are three things. The blue, the goldenrod, and then the white. On the table in front of you in piles are two booklets about the budget and the legislative process, and I encourage you to take those. If you like those let me tell you we got those free from the Speaker of the Assembly's office, Herb Wesson. You can get those from your local legislator, and they're worth a lot in terms of understanding the process. Today I'm going to take you through the most elementary parts of the budget process because it is the key to everything else that we do.

The California State budget, as you no doubt know and you will know better tonight – and I hope you will listen to the State of the State Address tonight, because I hope by the time I'm done it will actually mean something. When a few weeks ago the Governor announced that we had a \$35 billion deficit it's not exactly what we're accustomed to knowing. **We (State of California) are not statutorily, constitutionally allowed as a state to run a deficit, which means that if we don't get revenue income we can't spend anything. There is no truth to the rumor that you hear that the government in the State of California has overspent. What it has done is projected a budget based on projected income. That's all that they are legally allowed to do.** Well, businesses and many wealthy individuals file quarterly returns. Upon discovering that those quarterly returns did not actually produce any money we've had to revise several times during the course of the year. It's very customary, and you may have heard the term to have the May Revise. You probably read that in the paper or heard it. **The May Revise is the post-April 15 revision in the budget based on income. This year the revision after May was a disaster, so all of the programs that were being projected to be funded had to be cut back. But we've also now had a December Revise, and we will have another revise as we look at where the income is coming from.** California, like many states, has put way too much emphasis in this budget on money generated from **the stock market boom. The problem is the stock market is now bust,** so the people who generally had that kind of income – very big money – don't have it. Couple that with the fact that we have **lost something on the order of 50% of the .com corporations out of Silicon Valley and you have a tremendous loss of revenue in this state.** Plus **interest rates are down,** so the investments the states made are not doing well. We want to believe – fervently want to believe – that there is really money there, we just have to reallocate it, and those of us who are advocates, particularly for children and for those in need, are really being faced with the fact that that just isn't true. **Seventy-five to eighty percent of California's budget is encumbered or fixed by the constitutional mandates that have been put into place by us, by those of us who vote.** Proposition 98 was passed by the voters. It was not a legislator who did this, it was not a Governor who did this, it wasn't some evil other who did this. We did this. **We (through Proposition 98) mandated that schools would have to get a certain amount of money according to what they had the year before, and that's not real negotiable. You can't just cut that,** because we put that in place. There are constitutional mandates for what needs to be done, and there are **bond acts that we have voted for. That's 75 to 80 percent of the**

**budget we cannot do anything about** because we already did it. **That leaves about 25 percent of the budget covering the programs that we all care about – hunger and nutrition programs, medical programs, welfare programs, childcare, environment, transportation, you name it – when you get that 75 or 80 percent of the budget that’s mandated and you don’t have enough money to pay those costs that 25 percent of the budget that is variable technically could disappear.** That means that you are looking at, if we do nothing but live with the revenues we now have, you are *looking at the shutdown and disappearance of the entire University of California system, the state college and university system, all medical programs – all medical programs – all hunger and nutrition programs, all welfare programs that are not paid for by the federal government. That’s where we are.* And that’s why it’s so bad. **We don’t have money hidden somewhere. We have money we can’t touch, and we may not even have enough for that.**

Well, then the question is for those of us who are advocates for those who are in that 25 percent category, what are we going to do? Well, there’s a group that’s been put together in Sacramento. We call ourselves the **Budget Allies, and we represent 160 different organizations, some faith-based, most of them advocates for healthcare, nutrition, food security, whatever, and we’ve agreed that the first step is that we’re not going to kill each other off in the process.** I mean, *what’s the point of saying to the Legislature, “Well fund my program for healthcare, but don’t fund childcare,” when the same child is at stake.* It’s like saying, “Well, okay, the kid doesn’t need his left leg. We’ll let that go this year. But keep the right leg. That’s okay because that’s mine. I have the right leg.” So we’ve agreed we’re not going to do that to one another, and **we’re not going to get into the kind of competitive fight that the conservatives want in order to keep taxes low.** We’re going to quote Jackie Goldberg. Do you know *Jackie Goldberg*? She’s a very wonderful legislator from Santa Monica. **She said – and I want you to embrace this as your absolute position – she said when somebody says to you, “No new taxes,” your response should be “Booooo.” You cannot let that become the way in which we operate.** We cannot determine that we’re going to go forward at the sacrifice of everybody in the State of California who is not wealthy, because that’s what we’re looking at. **We’re looking at creating a desperate poverty that will mimic what we saw 100 years ago before we had child welfare reform or child labor law reform, before we had unions, before we had an eight-hour day.** You’re looking at a situation so dire in this state potentially that I don’t think any of us alive could ever project it how awful it could be, and you now have a structural situation in the State of California which makes doing something about that **extremely difficult, and that is we have a constitutional mandate that all fiscal issues, particularly budget issues, must be passed by a two-thirds majority.** That means sixty-six and two-thirds percent of the votes, and we do not have a Democratic two-thirds majority. We are short in the Senate by about three votes. We are short in the Assembly by six votes. That means budgets are being held hostage by six people. I don’t mean six identifiable people, but six votes. That’s what happened this last year. That’s why we got no new taxes is that there were four Republicans in the Assembly that we thought maybe we could turn. We didn’t, and those four votes held sway. **So rather than having a rule by majority we have a rule by minority.** We have the Republicans who steadfastly will not entertain the notion of even the euphemistic “revenue enhancement.” They won’t do it. So what are we going to do?

That’s where you come into play. The budget process is not as responsive as the legislative process for bills. During the sessions when bills are introduced – this just started Monday – when bills are introduced there are hearings on those bills and various committees along the line and testimony is received from the public in those committee hearings, which means you can either go in person, which is kind of trippy, sometimes a little awesome occasionally, but it’s sort of fun to do, but you certainly can send letters and e-mails and faxes and make phone calls and do whatever. On the budget it’s a lot more amorphous, because the budget committee goes on during the course of the year but a lot of this information is behind closed doors, so what we’re trying to do is to make the members of the Budget Committee more obvious. **The chair of the Assembly Budget Committee is Jenny Oropeza from Long Beach, and the chair of the Senate Budget Committee is, thank heavens, Wes Chesbro from Sonoma,** because I’ve seen him in action around these issues of social concern. Jenny Oropeza is a little more sort of cut and dried in her positions. I mean, she’s a

very good person, but she really tries to be businesslike about this, and Wes doesn't even make a pretense about that. **But the fact is no matter how good or how well meaning they are there is no money.** There literally is no money. So our Budget Allies, we want you to be part of this to have the voice from what we call the balance of the state, not just those of us in Sacramento. I mean, there's a group of us from the different faith groups. We have the Lutheran Office on Public Policy, the Catholic Conference, Friends Committee on Legislation, and Jericho, which is an interfaith group led by a wonderful nun, Sister Simone Campbell, and we go around together and they're starting to call us the God Squad. We advocate for these issues, and you can hear them saying, especially when I come because I represent the mainstream protestant community, "here comes the church lady", and so they kind of blow us off because they've seen us so many times. But we do represent a large community of faith and a large community of social activists, and we want you to prove that that's true. It's all well and good for me to go up and say I represent 1.5 million members of the faith community, but **I need those voices, and you are those voices, and it doesn't matter what your religious affiliation is.** I don't even care if you're atheist. It really does not matter. **The fact is you still represent a part of a faith community that believes in social justice, and those voices have to be heard. We are in such bad condition that if we don't advocate and we don't make it clear that while the big money guys are out there in their thousand-dollar suits with wads of cash, we're representing people who vote. We're representing people who pay taxes. We're representing people who live and produce in this state, and those voices have to have advocacy, and anything you do, go back to whoever you work with and help them to stand up and have a voice too.**

I was very lucky. About 25 years ago I got to meet Maggie Kuhn. Do you all know who Maggie Kuhn is? She was one of the founders of the Gray Panthers, one of the activist groups for seniors. Maggie Kuhn was shorter than I am. Maggie Kuhn was about half as wide as I am. She looked as if a wind would blow her away, a gentle breeze, and she was one of the strongest human beings I've ever met in my life. And she has a saying, and you can even get a bumper sticker that says it, **"Stand up and speak the truth even if your voice shakes."** It is hard to go to a legislator. Some of them look like they've been sort of tricked out by Hollywood. I mean, they're incredibly tall and tan and have great clothes and all that, and some of them are impossible to talk to. I know. I've done this. **And some of your local legislators are among those people who are particularly difficult to talk to. That doesn't mean you stop. It means you come more often, you say more, you speak more loudly, you speak more firmly. Speak politely but firmly to make clear you're not going to go away, because that's what they're counting on.**

So how do you make this contact? How do you make statements around the budget? How do you make statements around bills that we care about? The blue sheet that I've given you, "How to Influence Your Legislator,"...there are two pages there. The second one is from the California Food Policy Advocates. And I'm not going to go through it step by step. You're grownup people. You can read. This is very handy. But I will say that it does give you kind of a guide to how to meet a legislator. We think it's all very well and good if you come to testify or you come into Sacramento and you want to meet your legislator in his or her office. It's a great thing to do. It's a lot of fun. The chances are if you call ahead you will get a meeting. You may or may not see the legislator in person. You may see staff people. Let me say at the very beginning, whether you do it in Sacramento or whether you do it in the district, **if you see the staff rather than the legislator, be glad. The staff people are much smarter, they're much better informed, and they're much more polite than most of the legislators.** Not all. There are some legislators I think are wonderful.

**Participant comment:** Don't get stuck with the intern.

**Elizabeth Sholes:** Well, the intern can be remarkably malleable in terms of really listening. Not always, and they probably don't have the same kind of influence, **but you do want staff people to be attentive, because the staff people are the ones who are specializing in your area of interest.** There is going to be somebody who does welfare, there's going to be somebody who may or may not do food policy, there may be people who do different kinds of things, but you know the legislator to

some extent is relying, if they have any sense, on those people. **Now one of the risks that we've discovered with term limits is that the legislators are really very naive who are coming into the Legislature because they're there for six years, they don't get a lot of background, they don't come from a lot of background, so the staff people actually become even more important.** If you get a meeting in a district office, and we encourage you do adopt a legislator in your area and to follow that person when they come back – I don't mean stalking, please – but follow that person when they come back into the district, which they do once a week, and they generally have office hours either on Friday or on Monday. **You're entitled to try to make appointments.**

Now my mom, who probably got me into all of this by telling me I should care about other people and have a social conscience, and much to her surprise I listened, she used to go regularly to see her congressman in Western Illinois, who was slightly to the right of Attila the Hun politically, and she was a Democrat. So it was always just kind of not a good situation right from the start, but she used to go by herself, and she was a very formal lady. I mean, she raised me to think like a Democrat and dress like a Republican because she thought it was a good entrée so people would pay more attention to you, and she was right. But she would go regularly to see these congressmen and nothing ever happened, and the reason was she went alone. We don't recommend this. **We say go in groups, represent a group, make one up if you don't have one because if you know anything about our political history you may know the writings of Alexis de Tocqueville, who wrote about America in the 1830s and discovered that the fundamental core of democracy: *although we like to think of it as an exercise in individualism and an exercise in individual freedom, which it is, but the core of how it works is groups, not individuals.*** So if you represent something more than just yourself, if you go with other people you may find out when you call ahead to the office to find out how many people can be accommodated or if you have a very large group how many people will go in and be the spokespeople, you have much more effect. It's not to say you can't call your local representative and say what you have to say, get it on the record, but it would be easier if you do make these visits if you have a group. Okay, you've got a legislator who is very full of himself or herself and doesn't really want to see you and you do get stuck with the intern, always forevermore, amen, you never get to see anybody who does policy for a living, your next move is they hold community meetings. **They can't keep you out of those community meetings, so you go collectively in groups with signs and you have to be heard. It's the law. It's part of the Brown Act that mandates open meetings. *You must be heard. You don't get to dominate, but you must be heard, and if you show up at every single community forum and you have something to say they're going to have to pay attention*** to the fact that there are five, ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty of you out there time after time after time. And you have one litany that you say over and over again: **Only people vote. Only people do the work. Only people, real people pay the taxes, because the corporations only pay 5.9 percent of our taxes.** So you have a real strong role here. We do advise on issues where there is a real need to be heard quickly that **those of you who are comfortable with a computer get to writing letters by e-mail.** Now for a long time it was really said that e-mail was not very effective, that you really still needed to write letters, and that's true. Letters are good. **But we were told by staffers from both parties and both houses that e-mail is increasingly popular,** and does anyone want to take a guess why e-mail is so popular?

**Participant comment:** You can erase it?

**Elizabeth Sholes:** No, they download it, they print it, they put it in the files where it belongs.

**Participant comment:** It's time and day is noted.

**Elizabeth Sholes:** It's time and days are recorded. That's good, but they can do that too with a time clock. They do that with letters that come in. **No, it's anthrax. Isn't that bizarre? Anthrax. They're afraid of anthrax. E-mail doesn't have anthrax. So the entire world has turned upside down over something rather peculiar.** I mean, you know when you're living in a new age when that's the reason why. But that's what we were told is that people are really worried about that. *If you ever try to go to the Governor's office to deliver anything they won't take it from you. You have to*

*identify yourself, say what you're doing, why you're doing it, and they will send you around to the mailroom where they then have to call ahead and let them know that you're coming because the mailroom won't take it from you either because they're so afraid of anthrax. **Brave new world! So e-mail has a real important role here for those nervous legislators, but there are some such as Sheila Kuehl who will not accept e-mail because she thinks it's a waste of her staff time to have to sit there and read it and download it and file it and respond to it. She would prefer faxes. Even though they have to be read they don't have to be downloaded and printed, and she thinks it's a lot more efficient.*** But my favorite is Joe Canciamilla, who represents the Pittsburgh area, who told a group of us who went to see him that he really only pays attention to handwritten letters, and I said, well bring back the quill pen and the flowered stationery, honey. That means he probably answers like two a year, because I don't think a lot of people sit down and do that anymore, but **it might be worth calling your legislator to find out what mode of information or transmission and communication they prefer.** If they really want flowered stationery, well go for it. But that doesn't mean you don't call and you don't send the e-mails. They will pay attention to it, maybe just not the same way. But if you have anything left over from your grandmother go ahead and use it. That's great. But we just say communicate, communicate, communicate. Don't stop. Don't let this ever stop. **They need to hear from you on a practically weekly basis if there's a really hot issue.** That doesn't mean you have to respond about everything. **Pick your topics.** And one of the ways that you can do that is by working with us if you so choose. We have a new website. That's on the white paper. This is the picture of the second page of our website.

Go to [www.calchurches.org](http://www.calchurches.org). This is actually a very pretty golden-green site. We like you, but we don't like you enough to print it in color. We can't afford it. **(End of side A)**...for California Church Impact. The Impact page is important, I think, because it's interactive. Now **California Church Impact is our lobbying legislative arm of the California Council of Churches. You may not realize, although most of you work in nonprofit, so I think you do, that nonprofits, 501c3-recorded companies for the IRS, may not lobby exclusively, and they can't do other political kinds of action, but if you're a 501c4 incorporated company, corporation, then you may do those things. So that's our 501c4. It permits me to be a professional lobbyist.** And I am. I'm a registered lobbyist right up there with the people from Enron. I don't make quite what they make, but it's the same principle. *But I consider that the people for whom I work are not a giant corporation, but you. You and everyone that you serve. So our page is oriented to helping you find a voice.* Not just mine, but your own and those of the people that you work for and with. So this page, which is the opening part of "How Can I Take Action," shows that at the bottom there are some blank boxes. If you put your address and your nine-digit zip code, which you can find on almost any magazine subscription or utility bill or anything else, it will tell you exactly who your legislators are right smack in your neighborhood. From there you can go to the second thing that you're looking at now, which is the home page. If you look at the dark boxes at the top, **"Issues and Legislation,"** if you click on that several things can be done. We will have letters. We have two now. One is to the President of the United States asking him not to be a lunatic about Iraq. We don't put it quite in those words, but...and that can be sent directly with a click of a button from you. It doesn't come from us. It comes from you. You may also create your own letter to your own legislator, and this particular service that we're using is called CapWiz. We are the only state where they monitor and use the State Legislature all the way down to the local. I haven't actually tried this. I'm not really sure if you can do local letters, but you certainly can write to State representatives, Assembly and Senate as well as Congressional as well as the President. **You can write your own letter, and with the click of a button it goes to that person, so if you are really steamed about something please use our site and feel free to write a letter. It will not come from California Church Impact. It will come from you.** And that gives you some real immediate way to say what it is that you feel.

If you look at the fourth tab that says "Media Guide," this is one of my favorite parts, although it is currently very data heavy and it's not real usable by older machines because it can freeze your machine, so be a little bit careful, but the **Media Guide is every major newspaper, every urban newspaper in the State of California. Unfortunately it does not reflect much in the way of the ethnic press at all. But of the major newspapers they're all there, and with one click you can**

**log onto them and send a letter to the editor and just send it directly.** So if you're looking for the Fresno Bee you just go to Fresno Bee, and then when you write the letter it will go directly to the Fresno Bee, and it's a great way to get stuff off your chest. If your paper, like the Sacramento Bee has a 200-word limit, it will bounce right back to you because you put your own e-mail in there, so you'll know that it just needs some editing. It's a terrific opportunity to really get some fast action. If you prefer to download letters there's way to do that where you write in letter formatting, you can print it out, and then you can mail or fax it, but you can still do it right on our site. You don't even have to get Word or any of the other formats that you normally would do it in. It's a wonderful service.

As the legislative session rolls on, we will have a list of bills that we're sponsoring. **Now we take the stuff that Edie had that came from the Food Policy Advocates, these bills, we sponsored all of these. We had all of these at one time or another that we've written letters about, and what we do, the way we prioritize bills is level one, two, and three.** Level one means I work it from start to finish. I go to the legislature; I go to the hearings, I testify, I write letters. Every time it goes to committee I write that committee. Every time it gets into trouble I go and say something about it, and I follow it all the way through. We don't handle more than about 10 or 20 at that level because there's only so much of me to go around. The second level we write letters, and we often write letters several times, and the third we will write a letter to the author and let us go on as a matter of record, and then we help you all by keeping a list on our site of all the legislation. Okay, what happens if we don't sponsor something? The most that we take on, because the most we can handle as an organization, will be 100 bills. Well, there is also the Catholic Conference. They also have a lot of social justice issues, and they have a website as well, and it's caconference.org. So you can follow groups that you admire and respect. Food Policy Advocates have a site. We all have sites where you can track that legislation. But suppose there is something you want to follow that we're just not all tracking for whatever reason? Back to the blue pages on the second page, it's under "**Timing is Important.**" It's the second paragraph. **You can get a single copy of any bill from the Bill Room, State Capitol, or you can track bills through members of the Senate and Assembly through the California Senate website, www.sen.ca.gov. That is where you get the full bill. When you get the sites up, when you track, they will give you a chance to track it by the bill number, the bill author, the key word, or the topic. Just indicate which way you want to do it. If you're looking for something on child nutrition just put that in if you're going to do it under topics – child nutrition or key words – and then they will give you all the bills that have anything to do with child nutrition.** If you know that that wording is in the title of a bill you can use it under, I think you want to use it under the – our two different systems work a little bit differently – but you do it either under key word or topic depending on exactly how this thing is set up.

So you can follow the bills. You then can raise up the entire bill, and I will warn you, some of these bills are humongous. The one that I brought as a sample in the goldenrod page is Senate Bill 19 by Martha Escutia. And many of you will be familiar with this bill because it was a wonderful bill on child health and nutrition in schools, and she was one of the first people to make a really comprehensive stand for children's nutrition programs in schools really being worthwhile. They shouldn't just sell junk food. Are any of you familiar with the Senate Bill 1520 that was introduced by Deborah Ortiz to ban soft drinks in school? That thing went down like a ton of bricks, and what was really weird is that it's basically already incorporated to some extent in SB 19, which passed. So I'm not sure why it didn't fly. These bills are lengthy in some instances because you have **two different ways that bills are introduced. One of them is a generic bill.** That's what Sheila Kuehl is going to do with the single-payer healthcare plan bill is it's going to be a very generic bill the details of which will be worked out later by members of the public and participants and advocates for healthcare. **The second way to do it is to have a laundry list. Well, a lot of these bills as a laundry list are subject to line-item veto, are subject to a lot of wrangling over little tiny sentences.** But in a laundry list you know you're going to get what you want. This bill was something of a laundry list. Another one which involved a great deal of nutritional issues was a successful bill, AB 429 by **Aroner and Chang**, and that got passed with a laundry list of social welfare items, one of which included something that we participate in and many of you may know about, which is the California Interfaith Energy Assistance Program, and we were able to secure through that bill a version of the Low-Income

Housing Energy Assistance Program, which is federal. We got the California Low-Income Housing Energy Assistance Program. It's called LIHEAP, and we had a California LIHEAP. We were really, really happy about that because it meant it was yet another way to preserve family economies from being devastated by what you know were just the out-of-control energy costs. Well, that is important as a nutrition issue because if you're diverting your money from food to paying off PG&E or whoever your utility it is you know what a disastrous impact that's going to have on the welfare of children, so we were really happy that we had this bill passed, and they included sort of a laundry list of all the other things that they wanted to make sure were there.

**The problem is that California again has line-item veto.** A lot of states don't. The federal government doesn't unless it got passed and I didn't notice it, but the President doesn't have line-item veto. I know it's been debated for a long time. That means that if you have a bill that has multiple parts and there is financing for those parts the Governor can actually come along and cut that out. Now I apologize for the fact that the type on here is so small, but this is how it comes from our legislative tracking service that changed over from being really readable to not readable at all. **But the first part that you see here is the Governor's veto. Now, he passed the bill. He was very happy with Martha Escutia's plan for child nutrition. What he vetoed was the money to finance it.** That's been the case more times than I can tell you. We have laws on the books that haven't got a penny to enforce because of the critical budget issue. **Another nutrition bill** that we were very much in favor of that was sponsored by Carl Washington from the South Central area of Los Angeles was Assembly Bill 1947, which was to provide food stamps for those who were convicted of drug felonies who were now enrolled in a certified state-approved drug rehab program, and the reason we wanted to preserve the food stamps – and initially we wanted a broad base of social services – but the reason we wanted to provide food stamps was how are you going to take care of that person's family while they're in a drug rehab program? What's going to happen to them if they don't have access? *So we thought it was a really great bill, and we thought it was a real act of restorative justice. If somebody's turning their life around and they're involved in a drug rehab program don't you want to at least give them and their families food?* You know, this doesn't seem like it's a hard issue at all. Food is so essential. **It got vetoed, and it got vetoed because it costs money.**

**What you're facing this year and one of the reasons why your advocacy is so important is that anything that costs money --never mind even introducing the bill.** It's going to be a year where the legislation that you see – and you have to watch this – **the new legislators coming in, particularly the very conservative ones, are going to look at this as a golden opportunity to pass legislation that is very punitive, because there are different forms of legislation. Some of them are enabling; it's a law to enable something to happen. Some of them are rationing or restrictive to prevent something from happening. Some of them are fiscal, some of them are not. What you're looking for, what we're expecting to see from the State Legislature are a great number of restricting laws because enabling laws usually do take money in some form, but restricting laws that keep people from doing things...**and the very conservative element within the State Legislature looks on the nonprofit sector and the minority community and the immigrant community and the poor and the homeless as a great place to prove that they're tough. *You may very well see your clientele, you may very well see the people for whom you advocate, become the targets of real hate from the State Legislature as a way of proving they're tough.* They're not soft. We see it from the Governor in terms of the ways that he treats prisoners. That was one of the reasons why he would not support Assembly Bill 1947 on the food stamps for those in drug rehab programs is because he also was afraid that it would make him look soft on crime, that somehow he was coddling the drug user, the drug felon. *So we're very concerned that your clientele, your people are going to become the targets so that the people who are already dealing with hunger issues, who are already the most vulnerable people in the state are going to become even more so.* Again, another reason why we need your voice. **We need you to speak for these people to say why it is that the homeless, who can barely eek out things from garbage cans, should be deprived of even more opportunities and services.**

Now, you say, okay, but how can we really be sure that we make a difference? Well, we had money in the budget. You know, we do not have a federal budget. **Do you know we don't have a**

**federal budget? We're just kind of going on last year's budget. We all have this kind of gentleman's agreement that we're just kind of going on. We do not have a budget, and so we're not able to release money that is supposed to be passed and approved by the President because there is nothing offered to the President because there is no federal budget. That means that all the welfare is just exactly where it was last year, and the release of some of those monies was being held up because there actually isn't a budget. It isn't actually legal to do this even if we do have this sort of gentleman's agreement, and it is mostly a man's agreement. I hate to tell you that. But we have some money, the Emergency Food and Shelter funds, that if we didn't get those monies we were not going to be able to do any of the winter relief programs that we're all hoping will help those who are really in need. So every State Council of Churches got online and used the e-mail to e-mail every member of their congressional delegation. Nothing else moved. We got that money. That money got released. It got released because they heard from us. They heard from every State Council, and there are 30 of us. That meant that they were hearing from essentially all the people that we represent, and the Catholic Conference did the same thing. We all mobilized and got people to write people, and we did it ourselves. It can make a difference. It may only be a stopgap. Is it going to stop the war in Iraq? Probably not. Is it going to make the President nervous about the war in Iraq? We hope so. We think that it's important for people to make very clear that part of the budget crisis we have right now is that we lost federal funds that were scheduled to be here because they were taken back to wage the war. It's really important that we keep that focus up. It's really important that we let our constituents know that. It's really important that you understand that what got done is not actually legal, that those were encumbered funds that were directed to certain programs, and it is so borderline over the limit of presidential executive authority that we really need to be speaking about this very loudly. But that's part of what moved the budget deficit from \$20 billion to \$35 billion is we lost that money.**

*So is there good news? Yes. And that is that we actually know that your voice matters. We actually know that at the various points of intersection with the Legislature around the budget and around the bills that we're going to be sponsoring and that you care about you can be heard. So at this point I want to stop telling you all about how wonderful it is for you to act and take any kind of questions that you may have about what I just said.*

**Ray Ensher:** I want to know whether this is fact or fiction. We have some legislative aides here and so forth. Is it true that they stack them on a particular issue? That they put them in a 'no' pile and a 'yes' pile and that's how they make their judgments?

**Elizabeth Sholes:** Well, everybody is different, so ask the legislative aide.

**Raphael Trujillo, from Assembly Member Sarah Reyes' office:** What we do is that when you call us we actually have a constituent tracking form that we fill out, and we actually give that to the chief of staff, but when you write letters we treat them differently because we actually write a response back to you. I think it's a good way for you guys to kind of understand that when you write letters to us it's our policy in our office to actually write back to you, and so if we see a lot of these letters coming we understand where...with the constituent tracking form those go directly to the chief of staff, so that's how we treat telephone calls and letters in our office.

**Diane Scott:** When the return letters go out are they form letters or are they individually written to the people who wrote in?

**Raphael Trujillo:** They're actually issue-based, and so depending on what the issue is a letter will be written to the constituent. Depending what your views are, that's how the letter is tailored. I mean, it's different for every office, but for our office we try to write back to the constituents and let them know

that it is being considered very much like our constituent tracking forms. But we do record it, and the chief of staff does receive copies of all our tracking forms.

**Elizabeth Sholes:** May I say that Assembly Member Reyes is one of the most responsive members in the Legislature. She is very good about that.

**Gloria Grijalva:** Just another question for Raphael. In regards to e-mail or letters there was discussion earlier about preference. What is Assembly Member Reyes' preference, or is there?

**Raphael Trujillo:** **Just for our office it's letters.** Our e-mails, it takes us a while to get from Sacramento to our district office. Each assembly office is different. At ours all the constituent services are actually coming out of the district office and most of the legislative work is being done in Sacramento, but there might be different offices where they kind of just mix them up, but for our preference it's better for you to write a letter or just give us a call in the district office because that's where we are and that's where we actually provide the constituent services for you.

**Participant question:** How about a fax?

**Raphael Trujillo:** A fax works the same as a letter. Just make sure your address is on there.

**Elizabeth Sholes:** Yeah, **it's best to ask every district office.**

**Raphael Trujillo:** And one thing that we also do is we make sure that you're in the district, so make sure to put your address on there as well because actually **if you're in the Assembly district your voice is a lot louder** than if you're somewhere outside because the accountability is actually there with people who are in the district. That's a big thing.

**Elizabeth Sholes:** Some of the things that we've been told is that people who are chairs of committees such as Jenny Oropeza, she will listen to people from all over the state because her position is essentially statewide in that capacity as Assembly Budget chair. So that she listens to certain people in her district around the legislation that she is doing, but she has to listen to everybody in response to the budget. So it kind of depends on what it is you're discussing.

**Don McClellan, Fresno County E&TA:** I just wanted to reiterate one good point that was made here just a second ago. If you're using e-mail **make sure your address is on the e-mail.** I noted in the last year when I had done some correspondence with my legislators that the instant I put my address on the e-mail I got responses. Prior to that there weren't any.

**Larry Trullinger, Interfaith Alliance:** One quick comment in regard to Ray's question about tracking. There are legislators who keep track of pro and con on issues as a way of a factor in their decisions, and the key is that you really need to get to know personally, or at least make one call to your district director or your chief of staff or whoever depending on the type of legislative office you have access to and find out what their system is because it will make some difference. The other thing is directed toward the Council of Churches and your organization, which is wonderful, but unfortunately the people that we're trying to serve with the social justice and the programs and we're advocating for don't really advocate for themselves. By that I mean they don't vote, they don't register, they don't go to the polls. And that is where we're going to make a difference. Unfortunately, the people that are against this, the other side of the house if it were, do vote, and so that's where we're at that distinct advantage, so the best way and the **surest way we're going to get real progress made is to really work at registering and getting people to the polls, and I think your organization with the amount of people you have and who you're affiliated with and outreach could make a tremendous difference.**

**Elizabeth Sholes:** Yeah. We work with **PICO** and some of the other groups that are doing a great deal more now to get people to understand their own authority and their own power around those issues, and **PICO** brought eight thousand people to Sacramento to make a pitch around the first drastic issues in the budget and made it very clear that each and every one of those people had registered to vote – they were all citizens. Although some of them were relatively new immigrants they were all citizens – and that they were going to vote. They were going to make a difference. And it did change some minds because people are accustomed to saying the poor, the homeless, the disaffected, “They don’t vote. Why do we care?” And it’s important for us to make very clear that that can happen.

**Edie Jessup:** I want to add in here that if you will mark your calendars for the second week in May **Fresno Metro Ministry will again take a bus trip for Hunger Action Day, and we hope that you will come with us and bring your clients too**, and we’ll have more on that. It is a day where we do go to visit, we make appointments with all the legislators from the Valley and people can actually go and talk to them on specific issues. *This is right before the May Revise* that you spoke of earlier, and so I wanted to add that.

**Participant question:** The dates are when?

**Edie Jessup:** It’s the second week in May. It’s the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup>, and I will get you more information on that.

**Elizabeth Sholes:** We want to make clear if you look on the back of that goldenrod, the bill that we have, Senator Escutia’s bill, we have what we call talking points. **When you’re going to make a legislative visit be focused.** I mean it’s not to say that if your Aunt Hattie went to school with his Uncle Milton or whatever you don’t want to bring that up. Those are human contacts. But we want you to be focused because everyone’s time is very precious. But we also know from dealing with legislators who don’t understand what we’re talking about that it’s a way of keeping the legislator focused. And **bring things in writing.** If you have a point you want to make don’t overwhelm the person with facts, figures, details. Bring those on paper so that they can read it later. **Talk to the legislator or the staff person really about the human element of what you’re dealing with**, and you more than almost anybody dealing with the kinds of issues and concerns, you have those human stories that you need to bring to the table. **Because if you don’t make the consequence of this budget and everything else that we’re talking about very clear when you come in May, people are just going to blow it off and say oh yeah, yeah, yeah, it’s just you bleeding heart knee-jerk liberals.** You really can focus it around human stories, and legislators who are kind of waffling are going to pay more attention. Also, **never forget to tell the good legislators they’ve done good.** Never forget that. It’s first of all a thank you. You owe that just to be polite because they’ve been out there doing what you want, but when they weigh and balance who’s for, who’s against, they have to know that you’re there with them. They often take it for granted, but they really need that feedback, so don’t forget to say thank you to somebody who did a good job.

**Diane Scott:** I have a couple of questions. **The first is there are many on-line organizations that will have you click onto theirs and send a message to Congress, and I’m wondering if those are effective at all.** That’s one question.

**Elizabeth Sholes:** **Yeah, they are effective.** I mean, that’s kind of what we do when we have you sign on, although you can alter the letter. It doesn’t have to be exactly as we’ve written it, but we do have people send letters. We got five thousand hits in one weekend on our site when we sent a letter to Bush asking him to use caution and discretion before he plunged us into war. Quantity does matter in those instances. *The one thing that we’ve been told, and disabuse me if I’m wrong about this, but the one thing we were told is that if you have those preprinted postcards and you just put your name and address on it and just send it in nobody pays any attention to that. If they come en masse, I*

*mean if somebody collects 10,000 of them, yeah, you're going to sit up and pay attention to this, but if you just take it and one day you feel like signing it and putting a stamp on it, it really isn't worth the effort. But e-mails, yes, it does matter. It does matter.*

**Diane Scott:** Okay, my other question is this. **The block grants that were made for last year to the states for welfare, food stamps, those kinds of things, the ones that came to California, were they all spent for those purposes? Are they all gone now?**

**Elizabeth Sholes:** I honestly can't answer that. I really don't know that. Theoretically that's what it's supposed to do, but I know from working with just a City Council person in Buffalo, New York, who got block grants that he had a wide discretion about how it was spent, and that's one of the things people are concerned about is that if you have targeted line-item funding that is put into a block grant it allows too much flexibility for the legislator to spend that on pretty much anything. I can't remember exactly what...it was a discussion about the ways in which under the Republican dominance of Congress there was some indication that block grants that were supposed to be used for one thing were potentially going to be used for something wildly different. Oh, I know. It was the law enforcement grants that were supposed to go to improve community policing, but they were done as block grants, which meant that they could be spent for almost anything because you could justify it as community something or other. And so it was used to buy more cars and bigger parties and meetings and send people on trips and so on. Yeah, there's a lot of discretion there, so the answer is I don't know.

**Diane Scott:** Do they have to give an accounting?

**Elizabeth Sholes:** Well, have to and do, it depends on how strong the have to is and to whom. I suppose the **GAO** could take an inventory and ask how it was spent, but there's not much string attached to it in the first place so **it's kind of hard to misspend something if there's no guideline for spending.**

**Participant comment: (Inaudible.)**

**Elizabeth Sholes:** Well, on TANF money? Yeah. *Some are more restricted than others at this moment.* But you know, **with the increasing intervention at the federal level of executive privilege we're going to be seeing a lot of tampering with what is supposed to happen, and I'm hearing the possibility that we may be seeing that with the Governor. So you need to watch your money, you need to watch your programs, and you need to make sure that they comply with the letter of the law, and if you don't know the parameters and dimensions you can call** things, like if you go onto that senate site that I mentioned to you before you can actually click on the offices. It's tiny little script at the bottom about offices and programs. Go to the Senate Office of Research, pick somebody who deals with your topic area, and write to that person and ask them is this legal.

**Karen Adam, Welfare Action:** But how about in this area as part of the watchdog's function would be **to take part with the caucuses** and the communities in deciding? I mean, it's going to have to be cut back, some of these programs. I mean, one of the biggest concerns about TANF money is that something could come out of direct services to the family and go into childcare. Well, it's kind of a direct service too, but I mean is likely different ones. Those were the concerns, and they may or may not be appropriate at times. Let's get involved with the caucuses and be part of making that decision of where those cuts are going to be because we're going to...

**Elizabeth Sholes:** Oh yeah. That's a really good point. I'm glad you brought that up. If I had to tell you my hat's off to anybody in the State Legislature it would be the caucuses, particularly – and I don't think this is just bias on my part – but **particularly the women's caucus because I think they understand, I think they get it, and I think they're the most principled people.** I just am very

much in awe of them. And it is actually not just Democratic. It's women who really are greatly concerned. They may have different approaches to the end, but they're really greatly concerned.

**Karen Adam:** How many women are there now?

**Elizabeth Sholes:** You know, I don't know because with this new influx I have not reconfigured it, as I managed to leave right after the beginning. I mean, they've been in session two days now, and I'm not sure how these things are falling out. I don't know who's on the committees except some of the chairs, and I don't know who's in the caucuses, and I won't know that until I get back. There is nothing like being cut off from e-mail not to have any idea what is going on, but **I recommend that we familiarize ourselves with who are the members of those caucuses because they are the people to whom you can write out of district and have them pay attention because you're writing on behalf of a statewide issue to people who are members of a statewide caucus.** You kind of have to think this through about what the intent is of that person, you know, is this a caucus issue or is this a specific legislative issue, in or out of district, but do write anyway. I mean, I think these people, these women are very responsive. **I think the black and Hispanic caucuses are really good on some issues, really good on some issues,** but they tend to be more narrowly focused than the women's caucus, which is quite far reaching.

**Karen Adam:** But these caucuses would appreciate support, actually.

**Elizabeth Sholes:** Absolutely.

**Karen Adam:** And the black caucus in Congress, they've always developed alternative budgets and things.

**Elizabeth Sholes:** Yeah, in Congress more than any place, even more than in the State of California where we at least have the advantage of being relatively stable, those who are in Congress are facing enormous opposition around all kinds of issues. So do let especially those members who are members of those caucuses from California, do let them know that you're watching and that you care, and you can do that with our website.

And I'm supposed to say I'm **Karen Adam** from Welfare Action.

**Terri Soares, Fresno County Office of Education:** Good afternoon. Thank you for making some complicated issues simple and understandable. One quick question. Can I share this information with other (agencies/groups)?

**Elizabeth Sholes:** Oh, absolutely.

**Terri Soares:** Okay. I just wanted to be sure. Thank you.

**Elizabeth Sholes:** And those booklets that are on the table, the green and the blue booklets on the budget process or the legislative process, take what you want. There are a few more on the back table. There is also some of our energy stuff. If you want more of those budget and legislative things contact your local assembly member, senator, or Herb Wesson in the Speaker's office, because they are there for you if you want more for other people. And there was one more person who had a question.

**Larry Trullinger:** Yes. A comment on the CBGs, **the block grants. They are not untouchable. We just had a report on an example here in Fresno where there was a state CBG for community improvements and so forth, and 70 percent of that CBG was targeted for the West Fresno area. They actually in West Fresno only got 30 percent of it. Forty percent, the other**

**40 was allocated elsewhere in the city by your elected councilpersons.** The other point I wanted to make is **unspent funds that you may have in your budget from prior years or whatever, right now the Governor has got his eye on Redevelopment Agency funds.** Redevelopment Agency set aside a certain portion of their funds for affordable housing. I realize that's not nutrition, but the same would apply.

**Elizabeth Sholes:** Right.

**Larry Trullinger:** So a lot of these RDAs have not spent the money on affordable housing. They have some sizable sums there. What Davis is proposing to do is pull a Wilson-type (**inaudible**), if you remember that, and *he's going to take those unspent funds to alleviate the state budget. So if you have an agency, those of you that are working on budgets, if you're State or County or City and you haven't spent your funds you better make sure you do something with them quickly.*

**Elizabeth Sholes:** Yeah, **spend them or lose them.** I mean, these are perilous times.

**Marian Mosely, Fresno/Madera Medical Society Alliance:** I have a question regarding SB 19. **When Governor Davis deleted funding he states here that part of the reason was because we had not used our full complement of federal funds.**

**Elizabeth Sholes:** Right.

**Marian Mosely:** **How do we access those federal funds?**

**Elizabeth Sholes:** This has gotten to be one of the Budget Allies' strategies is that **he vetoed quite a number of bills where they were the in-kind contribution to sometimes ten times the amount of federal money, but we've got it vetoed because we didn't want to spend say like \$800,000 to get \$8 million from the feds.** First of all, *it's very tricky right now because you don't know what the feds are going to give you versus what they're going to send to Iraq.* I mean, not being fatuous about this, this is a real serious problem. **But one of the strategies we're trying to implement is to talk about every program that can qualify for federal funding. Rather than building a state budget with state money use your leverage around those programs to target matching or in-kind, especially if you can parlay it into more money from the feds, and then cross your fingers and hope it doesn't go to the war effort.** That's going to be a strategy we're going to be looking at.

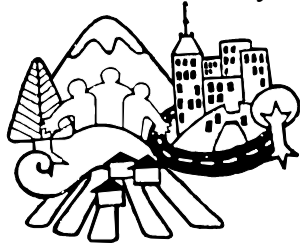
**We are going to be looking at structural issues in the budget,** and I want you to be paying attention to these things. **Alterations to Prop 13 around corporate property, raising the rates on the income tax for the upper brackets and widening the interval. Right now people who make \$8 billion pay exactly the same as people who make \$80,000.** Yeah, they do. The rates do not go up any higher than that. The rates have been cut. We want to roll them back. We're talking about making some serious alterations in a number of different areas on taxation and revenue, so be paying attention because we're going to need voices in favor of those sorts of things to really be talking about **getting some revenue going into this stream.** And some of it will affect us individually. **Raising the vehicle license fee, again,** back to where it was. You're going to pay double what you did last year if we do that. Ouch. I know it hurts, but we all have to share the pain, and this will generate quite a lot of revenue, too.

**Edie Jessup:** Thank you Libby. I want to thank you all for your participation, and I hope that this will stimulate you this year to be on top of the legislative issues that are impacting our lower-income neighbors here in Fresno and the folks that you work with every single day. And as a group we can begin to make an impact, I think, with our legislators if we're on top of it. So stay in touch. We'll stay in touch with you. Thank you very much for being here.

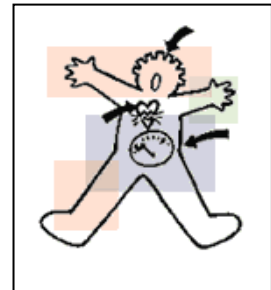
**Making Connections Resource Directory 02-03**

Available from Fresno Metro Ministry Office, \$5 each.

Each participant in the Forum received one complementary copy



Fresno Metro Ministry  
 1055 N. Van Ness, Suite H  
 Fresno, Ca 93728  
 559.485.1416  
 Fax 559.485.9109  
[metromin@fresnometmin.org](mailto:metromin@fresnometmin.org)  
[www.fresnometroministry.org](http://www.fresnometroministry.org)



Community Hunger & Nutrition Project

**2003 Action Teams for Community Anti-Hunger Efforts and Good Nutrition For All of Fresno**

The following Task Groups are forming for Work this year. Please consider where you would like put your efforts in ending hunger and supporting good nutrition.

**I WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE ON THE FOLLOWING TASK GROUPS:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Agency** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_ **FAX** \_\_\_\_\_

- Food Stamp Advocacy Group-** meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of every month at 3:30 pm at Metro. This is a meeting for community based organizations that work with low income people to work with Fresno County to improve access to Food Stamps.
- EBT Action Team-** meets every other Tuesday at 3:30 at Metro. This is a meeting for community based organizations to assure that the ‘rollout’ of EBT Food Stamp Card is successful for low income Fresno County residents. A representative group from this EBT Action Team then meets with the County once each month.
- Senior Nutrition Task Force-** meets the last Tuesday of every month at 11:30am at Metro to improve access to good nutrition for seniors.
- Community Food Assessment-** meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month at 11 am at Metro, and in sub-workgroups preparing to implement a city-county assessment of ‘where people get food, and what kind of food they get’. This survey will be used to develop recommendations for urban planning and ways to get accessible, affordable, nutritious, cultural appropriate food to everyone.
- Child Nutrition Task Group- NEW**  
 This Task Group will form this spring to encourage an end to child hunger and encourage good nutrition for kids in school and the expanded use of federal nutrition programs. Time to be determined. (The best time for me is \_\_\_\_\_(day) AM PM).
- Access to Food Resources: low barrier food pantry; gleaning group.**  
 Time to be determined. (The best time for me is \_\_\_\_\_day AM PM)

**Community Hunger and Nutrition  
FORUM EVALUATION**

January 8, 2003

Please give us your opinion of today's Community Forum

*“Learning Effective Advocacy Skills for Legislative Issues”*

How would you rate: *(Circle one number for each)*

	<i>A Little Useful</i>		<i>Some</i>		<i>Very</i>
1. How useful was the information in today's Community Forum?	1	2	3	4	5
	14		2	11	
	<i>Poor</i>		<i>Okay</i>		<i>Great</i>
2. Rate your previous knowledge about today's subject matter.	1	2	3	4	5
	7	3	11	3	3
	<i>A Little Likely</i>		<i>Some</i>		<i>Very</i>
3. How likely are you to utilize today's information in your work and/or community activities?	1	2	3	4	5
			8	9	10
	<i>Poor</i>		<i>Okay</i>		<i>Great</i>
4. Overall, how would you rate this forum?	1	2	3	4	5
			2	11	13
<b>5. What did you like best about today's session; what was most helpful, most appreciated?</b> A. The California State Budget process. Budget Bill that passed. Need Child Nutrition. Med food is essential to most people. B. The information provided about how to make your voice heard on issues was very thorough and valuable. D.Libby did a great job of explaining the budget, legislative process, ways to contact legislators in easy to understand terminology. Addressed questions very directly. Appreciated secular focus as well as mention of other faith-based organizations, Catholic, etc. E. The feedback session was great. She provided some greate/useful information that I will most likely use in the future. F. The speaker was excellent. She made a complicated process simple and understandable. G. It was inspirational, realistic in a depressing situation. H. The provided books on the legislative lobbying and budget were the most helpful. I'm a visual learner so I may have learned more if a powerpoint presentation was presented. The food was also delicious. I. Good info. Good resources.					

- J. How to be an advocate and handbook on the state budget process.
- K. Never heard of this program so I was impressed with this information.
- L. Handout about ccc website.
- M. Guest Speaker with common understandable words.
- N. Good presenter. Clear, explains well, humor. Loved handouts on budget process and how to lobby. Q & A time.
- O. Information on how to legislate in group at community meetings.
- P. Elizabeth Sholes was a great speaker with a lot of great information. Ms. Sholes made this information very understandable. Thank you for lunch as well as the "Making connections"
- Q. Good to hear the critical nature for healthcare and food needs being cut severely in the budget considerations. Really important to know and work with legislators on "people" needs not being cut.
- R. Excellent representation for the Fresno-Clovis Community from various church and social groups.
- S. Specific information about the budget situation, deficit numbers. Tools and suggestions for advocacy.
- T. Elizabeth Sholes-excellent.
- U. Knowledgeable speaker. Wealth of information.
- V. Although principals presented were directed towards state and federal level, I believe it allows me to apply them on local governmental, organizational level.
- W. Listening to Libby again.
- X. Libby's clarification of points she finds important: such as how things work. Also information such as there are laws on the books that we can't fund.
- Y. Introduced to new groups and individuals. Some are different from Health Care Roundtable.
- Z. Thanks, Elizabeth Sholes for perception and humor.
- AA. Issues were explained clearly and concisely.

**6. What did you like least about today's session; what was frustrating or disappointing?**

- A. Budget cut should not increase.
- B. Perhaps, on issues such as this, breaking into small groups for discussion and sharing.
- D. Some of the info presented was disappointing or frustrating. But that's not the fault of anyone here !
- E. More diverse opinions. Not really a forum—seemed more like a seminar.
- F. Could time be set-up for networking and less speaker time? I would like to network more.
- I. No media, visual effects. Could have made it more interesting.
- J. All was well !
- M. Too short.
- N. Room a bit chilly.
- O. Need a class on this area. Never done it. Have 2 months as an outreach worker. But can see the need in my community.
- Q. Nothing.
- R. Off hand, nothing.
- T. Nothing.
- V. Focus only on positive, thank you.
- W. I think speakers need to be sure and spell out terms (jargon) so that those who may not be familiar with the jargon can learn and not be frustrated for a lack of understanding.
- X. Could have heard Libby speak for HOURS. This forum was too short.
- Y. Good Group.

**7. How and when will you use the information you learned at this workshop?**

- A. EBT and people. Budget cut effects people. Write a letter to your legislature. Legislative training.
- D. Probably not directly in my job as Recycling Coordinator. But definately in personal activism now and in the future.
- E. I will be utilizing this with more emails. I'll write to my state legislators. I feel better knowing that emails make a difference, and I'll be sure to voice my opinion more!
- F. Not sure.
- H. When employed and trying to make a difference.
- I. When I become a Dietician in 6 months.
- J. Soon.
- L. In setting up a meeting with Rep. Barbara Matthews asap re: Subsidized Child Care crisis in Merced.
- M. I expect to use this within a few months at a local level.
- N. To work with community residents in helping them/teaching them to advocate for community change.
- O. Today and from now on to build a food bank and clothing outreach at Malaga.
- P. I hope to use this information to advocate issues that our clients face as well as our organization.
- Q. Present points to the Democratic club in the Fresno area on how critical the cuts will be on low income citizens.
- R. Soon, very soon.
- S. Writing letters to legislators, considering making visits to legislators.
- U. Check legislative websites, make legislators more accountable.
- V. Now- my organization, policy makers and legislative.- W. Will write some of it up in our next newsletter.
- X. Lobby days. March 2003! Her(libby's) information was more useful than the information I got from the workshop I attended at lobbying last March in Sacto.
- Y. In my work. Info to binder I keep.
- Z. In job as Community Development Specialist (Housing) to provide voter registration form and encourage voting; at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship -share the tactics for social action; and current issues-education and advocacy.

**8. How could this Forum be improved?**

- A. People deeply want to understand the term of EBT- and the Budget cut.
- D. It was great.
- E. Make it a true forum by having more people share stories and ideas!
- F. MORE Networking. I have a number of ideas that could be utilized to promote networking.
- M. Make it a little bit longer.
- N. Provide more info or additional training on how to advocate to your representative—more specific.
- Q. The speaker was energetic, told it as it is on the state and national levels. We need to advocate for those who have no voice.
- R. No need for individual or introductions, especially long ones on individual biographies.
- W. Watch jargon.
- X. More time. Maybe focus on specific actions/laws to lobby for NOW. With legilaors in our districts. Also- information specific to local legislators.

**9. Please list suggestions for future Forums here:**

- A. Food is essential: Child Nutrition; Low Family income; raise up US economy.
- B. Could we have some action organizaing for
- D.Environmental focus, air quality,transportation
- F.Nutrition Policy Process
- M. Community Organizing
- Q.Would like to hear a report from the new director of West Fresno Health Coalition.
- R.Update on the need on quality training on medical interpreters for people with language problems.

**10. What do you feel are the most important things we need to do to end or reduce hunger in our Valley?**

- A. Government has to provide a better service and have more programs on Food for hungry people.
- D.Make it a more visible issue. Help people see what's going on. Don't let them ignore REAL people.
- E. Education of nutrition. Reconnect people to the land and to their food.
- I.Get the word out more. Use media more.
- J. Increase awareness.
- L.Better access to Food Stamps.
- M.Become network.
- N.Education on the issue, primarily with those impacted and work with them re: their own advocacy.
- O.More outreach to corporate America for food and jobs.
- Q. Not waste fruit-oranges, grapefruit, tangerines- on trees in peoples' yards—what a waste!
- R.To reduce hunger-what is being done now and more of it. Still too much food wasting or rotting in the fields.
- S.Increase education and media exposure.
- V.Collaboration. "Allies"
- w. Keep up your very good work.
- Y.Involve more of the ag industry, not just social services. It needs to be a cooperative effort.
- AA.Better food collection/distribution by privatized organizations.

**11. Please make additional comments here:**

- A. Government and people don't stop support each other. Child Nutrition should not decrease.
- G.Make a list of the caucus and committee assignments of local legislators.
- K.I am glad I came.
- L.Thanks for letting our group from Merced County join in.
- N.Would be interested in attending similar future trainings.
- Q.Sholes one of the better speakers we've had-I am glad I was able to attend today. Once again, the food was exceptionally good. Dressing for salad delicious and cheese topped pasta soup.
- R.Very uplifting session.
- V.Thank you.
- W.Thank you for organizing this Edie. Every time I attend I come away with good information!

**THANK YOU!**