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Media Advisory

No Budget, No Services, No Help for Victims

Another month has passed and still, no state budget. This time, as it has happened before, we are required to hold our breath even longer than we have in the past. While several senators and state reps, including our own Jim Brewster and Jay Costa have deferred their salaries, not all of them have done so. From our perspective, this should be the law: no budget, no paychecks. After all, isn't that what those who are not being paid we, non-profit government contractors, are forced to do? Not only can we not pay salaries, we cannot pay rent, utilities, food and other needs for those who come to us in the darkest time of their lives.

Charitable organizations have thrived for centuries in the United States. The origins of the tax-exempt sector predate the formation of the nation. These organizations were able to and expected to fill a gap in social welfare programs where the government programs proved insufficient. Today, we 501 (C) (3) organizations continue to absorb the cost and care of supporting those gaps by providing life-saving services more efficiently and more locally.

Budget decisions are difficult. They require a lot of negotiation, discipline and yes, horse trading. While we appreciate that there are two political parties and a few hundred legislators who all have different perspectives and local concerns, it's time, after so many years of budget stalemate to enact laws that allow the most vulnerable in our communities to continue to receive services they desperately need. 501C-3 organizations have contracted with the Commonwealth to provide these services. The legislature is paid, state employees are paid, why are those of us, human service organizations, who have a signed contract to provide shelter, food and services to the homeless and the most needy in our communities expected to "hang in there"?

Is this how we should wage our political wars in Pennsylvania; on the backs of the most vulnerable of our populations? If this is how it's going to be every time we elect a new Governor, laws must be enacted to ensure that human service contractors are paid first, not last.