California AIDS Activists Protest Schwarzenegger's AIDS Cuts

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Several hundred AIDS activists rallied in front of San Francisco's Civic Center on August 5 to protest Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's decision to cut $82 million in state AIDS funding, according to the *Bay Area Reporter*.

Schwarzenegger used his line-item veto power last week to cut an additional $52 million in general funding support to AIDS programs, including eliminating state funding for HIV prevention and testing efforts. According to the article, Democratic lawmakers are looking to fight the Republican governor's decision, which AIDS service providers fear could fuel new HIV cases and reduce health care options for those living with the virus. The cuts are an attempt to manage the state's $24 billion deficit.

"The funding for all those organizations really helped me to get my feet back on the ground and my life together," said Cecilia Chung, a transgender activist who was diagnosed with HIV 16 years ago. "He is cutting out people's lives."

California's state Office of AIDS is planning to release a breakdown of how much funding individual programs and cities will lose.

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