Assembly Member Fuentes has introduced AB 1560, Food for Health: Aligning Medi-Cal and Nutrition Assistance, a bill that would remove a CalFresh income barrier for Medi-Cal recipients and their families. AB 1560 proposes to:

* **Increase CalFresh participation**
* **Provide low-income Californians with a package of health benefits that includes CalFresh and access to free school meals**
* **Emphasize the role that nutrition plays in health**
* **Directly connect the current and future Medi-Cal population to CalFresh**

In the coming months, the Senate Human Services Committee is expected to hear AB 1560. We encourage organizations, groups, and individuals to use the sample letter below or write their own letters of support. We are asking supporters to:

* Fax letters of support to the Senate Human Services Committee Chairwoman Liu at (916) 324-7543. Please “CC” California Food Policy Advocates and fax us a copy of your letter to (510) 433-1131.
* Email letters of support to Mareva Brown, Chief Consultant of the Senate Human Services Committee, at Mareva.Brown@sen.ca.gov , Minority Consultant Joe Parra Joe.Parra@sen.ca.gov and “CC” California Food Policy Advocates by emailing us a copy to Kerry@cfpa.net.

**Questions? Contact Kerry Birnbach at 510-433-1122x110 or** **Kerry@cfpa.net**

June 14, 2012

The Honorable Carol Liu

State Capitol

Sacramento, CA 94249-0039

Re: Support for AB 1560

Dear Chairwoman Liu,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *[insert name of your organization]* supports AB 1560, legislation to align Medi-Cal and CalFresh income eligibility to ensure that low-income households utilizing Medi-Cal get nutrition support at home and that children in those households are certified for free school meals.

We support AB 1560 because *(choose one, more, or all of the following reasons)*:

* **AB 1560 increases CalFresh participation among current and new Medi-Cal recipients, and their families.** This bill would increase CalFresh participation by 227,000 Californians. AB 1560 will most impact working households with children that rely on Medi-Cal, and still have incomes below 100% of the federal poverty level. Currently, only 36% of eligible, low-income, working households participate in SNAP.
* **AB 1560 is a fiscally responsible bill that draws down federal nutrition benefits into the state and local economies.** AB 1560 could bring in up to $10 million in federal nutrition benefits to the state; USDA has shown that every dollar in SNAP (known as CalFresh in California) expenditures generates $1.79 in economic activity. This bill would bring California up to speed with 27 other states that use categorical eligibility as an effective enrollment strategy.
* **AB 1560 reduces duplicative applications and calculations.** Caseworkers will no longer need to determine CalFresh gross-income eligibility for Medi-Cal recipients and their families. Parents in these households will no longer need to fill out an application for their children to receive free school meals.
* **AB 1560 provides low-income households with a package of benefits: food at home and meals at school.** By connecting Medi-Cal recipients and their families with CalFresh, children in those households will also be able to access free school meals without additional paperwork.
* **It would reduce paperwork for parents and administrators.** This bill could improve administrative efficiency by enrolling households in multiple benefits at one time. It would also minimize paperwork that parents are traditionally required to complete in order to qualify for free school meals.

Low-income Californians would not be the only ones to benefit from CalFresh. My county loses approximately $\_\_\_\_ *[insert your county’s number from* [*http://cfpa.net/lost-dollars-empty-plates-2012*](http://cfpa.net/lost-dollars-empty-plates-2012)*]* in federal food stamp benefits that could be going directly back into the economy, supporting grocers, growers, and local government. According to the Unites States Department of Agriculture (USDA), every dollar in CalFresh benefits generates $1.79 in economic activity. AB 1560 presents a great opportunity to bring more federal dollars into the local economy during these tough economic times.

**I believe my community, in \_\_\_\_\_ *(insert your county name)* county could benefit from this because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

We urge this committee to pass AB 1560. Aligning CalFresh and Medi-Cal will provide valuable nutrition benefits to low-income Californians.

Sincerely,

Your name

Your organization

 cc.

California Food Policy Advocates

Your own Senator