

# The Food for Families Act of 2005, AB 696

The Food Stamp Program already does much to improve the nutrition of low-income people. However, the U.S. Department of Agriculture ranks California dead last for participation and access to the program. AB 696 from Assembly Member Judy Chu will reform the food stamp program and make it more responsive to our state's working families.

This legislation includes the following 5 improvements:

## 1) Cut Red Tape

*Move to a semi-annual reporting system for food stamps and cash aid*

### **Why?**

It will ease the paperwork burden on clients and administrators  
It will align the reporting requirements of the three major low-income programs.

### **How?**

The current quarterly reporting system at work in California would be replaced by a 6 month reporting requirement.

## 2) Link Health and Nutrition

*Make recipients of Medi-CAL "categorically eligible" for food stamps*

It would eliminate the asset and income tests, making it easier for applicants and administrators.  
It would help build the health-to-nutrition link needed between the programs.

Using current federal rules, Medi-CAL recipients would be made eligible for a welfare-funded service that would make them "categorically eligible" for food stamps.

## 3) Eliminate office trips for working folks

*End finger imaging for welfare and food stamps*

It would eliminate office trips for working folks.  
It would end a costly system of limited effectiveness.

California would end finger imaging and use the duplicate aid fraud prevention and detections tools at work in 46 other states. The combination of the new EBT, sophisticated computer matching, and other fraud prevention efforts would ensure that folks aren't "double dipping."

## 4) Don't waste county time

*Provide on-going federal benefits in areas of high unemployment*

Some folks facing a 3 month time limit go hungry simply because they live where jobs are scarce.  
Tracking the time limit and the annual reapplication for waiver is an administrative hassle.

As Congress intended, California would seek waivers of the 3 month time limit for all eligible areas in the state. This would replace the current requirement for individual counties to seek the waivers year after year.

## 5) Improve customer service

*Take action to change California's last place food stamp ranking*

Long waits, mountains of paperwork, and other hassles are hurting customer service.

The state would be required to develop a mail-in application, reduce verification hassles, and develop customer service standards.