

June 9, 2017

Senator Ben Allen
State Capitol, Room 5072
Sacramento, CA 95814



Los Angeles Office
205 S. Broadway, Suite 205
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: SUPPORT FOR AB 699 (O'DONNELL) - SAFE SCHOOLS FOR IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

Dear Senator Allen:

The California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) is in strong support of AB 699 (O'Donnell). This bill ensures that all K-12 students have safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environments regardless of immigration status or religious beliefs. AB 699 upholds the fundamental constitutional right of a public education for *all* California students.

CFPA is a statewide policy and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of low-income Californians by increasing their access to nutritious, affordable food. Many low-income children rely upon school meals to stay free from hunger. We need to foster safe spaces at schools to ensure that all children continue to have access to the many benefits of our public education system, including access to free or reduced-price meals. In order to reduce hunger and break the cycle of poor health and poverty, we must work hard to maintain a level of trust in the Institutions that serve all Californians.

AB 699 is important legislation that would provide critical protections and supports for immigrant students, including: prohibiting the collection of information regarding the immigration status of pupils or their family members; refusing school site access to ICE agents for any purpose unless there is a judicial warrant; requiring schools to comply with parental instructions relating to their children's care; offering information to parents and guardians about their children's right to a free public education, regardless of immigration status or religious beliefs; and educating students about the negative impact of bullying based on actual or perceived immigration status or religious beliefs.

It is more imperative now than ever to invest in California's future by protecting the right of all students to learn without fear in schools that are safe and welcoming. On behalf of the California Food Policy Advocates, for all the reasons stated above, we urge state legislators to promote equal educational opportunity for students regardless of immigration status and religious beliefs by voting in support of AB 699.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Colby".

Anna Colby, MS, MPP
Nutrition Policy Advocate
California Food Policy Advocates