SB 138 (McGuire) will expand Medi-Cal direct certification for school meals statewide, and ensures that children in very-high poverty schools have universally free school meals. SB 138 improves schools’ ability to fight child hunger and support student success with school nutrition.

SB 138 passed the Legislature on Thursday, September 14th with unanimous, bipartisan support. The Governor now has the bill and he must sign or veto it by October 15th.

**Please fax your letter of support to the Governor as soon as possible.**

We encourage organizations and individuals to use this sample letter or write their own letter in support of SB 138 to seize this opportunity to create hunger-free schools in California.

**Submit your letter of support to the Governor today!**

**Email letters to** **leg.unit@gov.ca.gov**

**cc** **annabel.snider@sen.ca.gov**, **elyse@cfpa.net**or

**Fax letters to** 916.558.3160

**cc** CFPA at 510.433.1132

**Organizations: please be sure to submit your letter on letterhead.**

**Individuals: please be sure to include your mailing address in your letter.**

Questions? Contact Elyse Homel Vitale at 510.433.1122 x206 or elyse@cfpa.net.

**[Date]**

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.

Governor, State of California
c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173

Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Senate Bill 138 (McGuire) – SUPPORT**

Dear Governor Brown,

**[I am/Name of your organization is]** writing in support of SB 138 (McGuire). SB 138 will improve school districts’ ability to identify low-income students, reduce child hunger, and support student success with nutritious school meals.

In your very first year as Governor in 1975, you signed into law a guarantee that low-income children should have a free or reduced-price meal each school day. You now have the chance to do even better by California kids by seizing SB 138’s new opportunity and technological advancements to seamlessly connect children to school meals through Medi-Cal, and to provide federally-funded, universally-free meals to students in our highest poverty schools.

More than one in four California children live in poverty. Over 1.7 million California households with children struggle to put food on the table.[[1]](#footnote-1) When a child goes hungry, their ability to learn, grow and thrive is compromised. School meals are very effective at fighting the devastating effects of child poverty. SB 138 would reduce child hunger by giving schools the best tools available to address the inequities, and give children a better chance to succeed.

**[I/We]** support SB 138 because: **[choose one or more of the following or add your own]**

* **School meals are proven to promote child health and support student success.** School meals mitigate the harmful effects of poverty on students’ health, emotional wellbeing, and overall development. Research shows that school nutrition significantly improve students’ cognitive abilities, reduce absenteeism, and improve behavior. Low-income students directly benefit from improved access to high-quality school nutrition.
* **Directly certifying children for school meals with Medi-Cal is effective and efficient.** California was recently granted permission to use Medi-Cal data to directly certify low-income students into school meals, without the need for additional paperwork that can miss immigrant and low-literacy families. Evaluations show that Medicaid direct certification improves enrollment without additional costs, and increases the reach of free school meals. It was piloted in 14 California districts with very positive results. SB 138 expands this successful pilot statewide, and magnifies the success of Medi-Cal.
* **Serving universally free school meals in very high poverty schools is a key strategy to fight hunger, promote equity and support academic achievement.** Federal universal meal provisions allow high-poverty schools maximize federal funding and serve free meals to all students, while decreasing administrative burdens on school staff. SB 138 helps remove the barrier of processing paper applications for each student, and gives students access to the healthy meals they need to learn.
* **SB 138 is urgently needed to protect California children from federal threats to the social safety net.** Congress and the Trump Administration are attempting to roll back gains in healthcare expansion, and to make harmful cuts to safety net programs that mitigate poverty. SB 138 would reduce harm to California children and communities.

**[If you prefer, insert your own reason here.]**

For these reasons, we support SB 138. We urge your signature on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

**[Your name and title]**

**[Your organization, if applicable]**

cc: Senator Mike McGuire

1. California Health Interview Survey, 2015. Accessed at: <http://ask.chis.ucla.edu/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)