

April 13, 2017

The Honorable Benjamin Allen  
Chair, Senate Education Committee  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Fax # (916) 445-7799



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

**RE: SB 78 (Leyva): After School Programs: Grant Amounts – SUPPORT AS AMENDED**

Dear Chairman Allen:

The California Food Policy Advocates strongly urge the Senate Education Committee to support SB 78 authored by Senator Connie Leyva. This bill would help ensure that California's most underserved students continue to receive after school programming. SB 78 will provide additional funding to the After School Education and Safety (ASES) program in response to the statutory minimum wage increases that have been passed onto these programs and tie future increases in ASES funding to future increases in the state minimum wage.

ASES serves more than 400,000 students daily in 4,000 programs. ASES programs provide underserved students with opportunities and resources that are essential to closing the opportunity and achievement gap. These programs provide hundreds of additional learning hours to underserved students as well as support their health and wellbeing by providing nutritious meals and snacks. On average, ASES programs operate at schools with over 80% of students qualifying for Free or Reduced Price Meals.

Despite increases in the state minimum wage (47%) and cost of living (21%), the state has not increased the budget for ASES since 2006. As a result, ASES programs have been stretched to their breaking point. Most programs surveyed in 2016 have already had to reduce enrichment activities; academic supports, staff hours and/or training, and 29% are very likely to close their doors altogether within the next two years without an increase in the daily rate.

California Food Policy Advocates is a statewide policy and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of low income Californians by increasing their access to nutritious, affordable food. The ASES programs provide access to nutritious food for some of our most vulnerable Californians, low income children. When ASES programs close their doors, low income children lose access to nutritious food. Many students rely upon school meal programs, including afterschool meal programs, for adequate nutrition. Across California, more than 1.7 million California households with children struggle to put food on the table. We strongly urge an "AYE" vote in favor of SB 78. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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

Anna Colby, MS, MPP  
California Food Policy Advocates