

April 7, 2017

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 2059
Sacramento, CA 95814



RE: SB 782 (Skinner)- California Grown Fresh School Meals- CO-SPONSOR

Dear Senator Skinner,

California Food Policy Advocates is pleased to co-sponsor Senate Bill 782, the California Grown Fresh School Meals Grant Program act. This bill is designed to improve the quality of school meals by increasing the number of school meals that are freshly prepared and made from Californian-grown agricultural products.

CFPA is a statewide public policy and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of low-income Californians by increasing their access to nutritious, affordable food. Throughout our 25 years of experience, we've worked to ensure that low-income children have access to healthy and affordable food. CFPA's past advocacy led to the California Fresh Start Pilot Project, which provided an increased reimbursement to schools serving California-grown produce through school breakfast, which far exceeded expectations by dramatically increasing the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables served and eaten in California schools.

School meals reach more than 3 million California students on an average school day. For the millions of low-income families who qualify for free or reduced-price school meals, school meals are best chance at a healthy meal on any given day. Research shows that healthy school meals improve academic achievement, reduce the risks for childhood obesity and diabetes, increase attendance, and have positive behavioral impacts upon classroom environments. Despite efforts to provide nutritious school meals through federal, state and local farm-to-school programs, more needs to be done to help districts serve fresh, healthy food.

While California leads the nation in agricultural production, we also lead the nation's in child poverty, with close to 1 in 4 children not knowing where their next meal will come from. Increasing the quality of school meals through California-grown food provides health and academic benefits to students AND economic benefits to the state.

SB 782 would promote the health of our children and our economy by incentivizing school districts to use California-grown ingredients to provide nutritious, appealing school meals. CFPA is thrilled to be working with you, and thankful for your leadership on this important measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tracey Patterson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tracey Patterson
Director of Legislation

California Food Policy Advocates

