

March 17, 2017

The Honorable Ed Hernandez, Chair
Senate Health Committee
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814



Re: Support for SB 575 (Leyva)

Dear Senator Hernandez,

On behalf of California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA), I am writing to express our support for SB 575, which ensures low-income Californians have access to free medical records when applying to public benefit programs.

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 more than 20 years of experience, we've worked to ensure that eligible California families have access to essential nutrition resources, including CalFresh and other federal nutrition programs.

Beginning in 2018, a newly re-imposed regulation of the CalFresh Program will limit certain unemployed, childless adults to only three months of CalFresh nutrition assistance within 36 months unless they meet specific exemptions. Individuals who have been medically certified as physically or mentally unfit for employment are not subject to the three month limit. Determining whether or not such an individual is 'unfit to work' will likely involve a careful review of their medical records. Some providers also charge to complete any forms. Low-income Californians who struggle to put food on the table likely don't have room in their budget to cover the cost of obtaining copies of their medical records or to pay for required form completion.

CFPA supports SB 575, because it takes proactive steps to connect struggling Californians with the nutrition assistance they need by eliminating financial barriers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melissa Cannon", is written over a horizontal line.

Melissa Cannon
Nutrition Policy Advocate
California Food Policy Advocates

cc: Deepen.Gagneja@sen.ca.gov and lnguy@wclp.org