



March 21, 2013

The Honorable Raul Bocanegra
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 94249

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Re: Support for AB 1178

Dear Assembly Member Bocanegra,

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) is writing in support of AB 1178 that would establish the California Promise Neighborhoods Initiative and increase access to and utilization of CalFresh benefits by eligible families.

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. One of CFPA's goals is to increase access to and participation in the federal nutrition programs, including CalFresh. With this goal in mind, CFPA believes that the coordination of services to low-income families and an emphasis on health and nutrition throughout the life course are paramount. AB 1178 proposes to streamline the application process to programs such as CalFresh and MediCal and increase outreach to eligible families as part of the California Promise Neighborhood Initiative.

AB 1178 improves coordination of services for children and low-income families, and prioritizes health and nutrition through its emphasis on CalFresh outreach and participation. In addition, it sets a laudable goal of 90% CalFresh participation in Promise Neighborhoods. AB 1178 recognizes the importance of schools as sites around which nutrition, health, education, and family services can coalesce. The emphasis on the interconnected health and well-being of children, families, and communities and the increased coordination of CalFresh outreach efforts are important steps toward improving health and nutrition for low-income families. This is particularly true in a state in which only 55% of eligible people are participating in CalFresh. Given the powerful connections among health at the individual, family, and community level and the importance of adequate nutrition, we should ensure that as many low-income Californians as possible receive coordinated services to minimize hunger and maximize opportunities for education, community-building, and health.

For these reasons, CFPA supports AB 1178 and thanks you for introducing this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alexis Fernández", written over a horizontal line.

Alexis Fernández
Nutrition Policy Advocate
California Food Policy Advocates