

March 27, 2012



The Honorable Jim Beall, Chair
Assembly Human Services Committee
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

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Dear Chairman Beall:

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) writes in support of AB 1970, which requires the California Department of Social Services to maximize the use of modern technology to remove barriers to CalFresh and CalWORKs enrollment.

CFPA is a statewide, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of low-income Californians. We work to fulfill our mission through nutrition policy advocacy focused primarily on strengthening the federal nutrition programs, including CalFresh.

With current state and county budget constraints, the use of technological advances allows for a more effective and efficient means of establishing public benefits eligibility. AB 1970 will:

- Establish a three-step verification process: (a) verification through self-attestation; (b) if an eligibility factor cannot be verified through attestation, the county shall verify the eligibility factor through available computer databases available to counties; (c) if the eligibility factor cannot be verified through (a) or (b), verification will be achieved consistent with Welfare and Institutions Code §11275.
- Increase the efficiency of communication by permitting electronic transmission of certain notices of action and other private communications between county welfare departments and the applicant/recipient.
- Provide for privacy protections limiting counties use of electronic information for any purpose other than communicating with the applicant or recipient.
- Require the Department to obtain a federal waiver to delay conducting the expedited service CalFresh interview until the regular CalFresh interview is conducted.
- Require that any state agency requesting a federal waiver, submitting an approved state plan or an amendment to the state plan to any federal agency, for any program administered by any Department pursuant to this code, shall be posted on the Department's website and shall be electronically available to the public at all times.

These changes would make CalFresh more effective and efficient. We urge you to support AB 1970.

Sincerely,
Kerry Birnbach

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kerry B.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nutrition Policy Advocate, California Food Policy Advocates

Cc: The Honorable Nancy Skinner