**Floor Alert**

To: *Members, California State Assembly*

From: Alexis Fernandez, California Food Policy Advocates

Date: May 31, 2011

Subject:Support AB 6 (Fuentes)—The CalFresh Act of 2011

**Problem:** Too many California families struggle to put food on the table. Yet, only 50% of eligible Californians participate in CalFresh (formerly the Food Stamp Program), ranking California second to last among states. Improving participation improves the health of low-income Californians and the health of our economy.

What does AB 6 do?

* Reduces paperwork: *AB 6 would move to California to the simplified reporting option used in every other state. This means less paperwork for administrators and low-income participants.*
* Removes barriers to participation: *AB 6 removes the finger print requirement. All but two other states effectively fight fraud without finger printing.*
* Removes utility paperwork and increases benefits: *AB 6 implements a “Heat and Eat” program which will remove the paperwork hassles associated with utility calculations and increases federal benefits for a significant number of households.*

Why Support AB 6?

* AB 6 is a fiscally-responsible bill. It would increase access to and participation in CalFresh; providing low-income Californians with critical federal nutrition benefits while simultaneously streamlining the administration of benefits and implementing cost saving efforts.
* AB 6 has broad support. There is a wide-variety of supporters from the agriculture, business, public health, nutrition, and anti-hunger communities.
* AB 6 helps meet federal demands. AB 6 acts as the legislative vehicle necessary for California to meet the recommendations and time lines set by the federal government in implementing a simplified reporting system for CalFresh.
* AB 6 brings California in line with other states. California is the last state using a modified quarterly reporting system and one of only 3 other states and one city requiring a finger image.
* AB 6 provides an opportunity for significant ongoing savings. Together a move to semi-annual reporting, the elimination of finger imaging and the implementation of “Heat and Eat” can save California an estimated $82 million per year on an ongoing basis.
* AB 6 generates much needed economic activity. For every $1 in CalFresh benefits allotted to low-income families, $1.79 is generated in economic activity. If implemented AB 6 could bring in an additional $1.6 billion in federal CalFresh benefits, resulting in more than $2.8 billion in additional economic activity.

*In times like these, we simply cannot afford to turn away valuable federal nutrition benefits for low-income families and the related economic activity that benefits all Californians; AB 6 ensures that the state maximizes federal nutrition assistance, while delivering benefits in an effective and cost efficient manner.*

For more information on AB 6, contact Alexis Fernández, alexis@cfpa.net , 510-433-1122 x 111