



1970 Broadway, Suite 760  
Oakland, CA 94612  
[www.cfpa.net](http://www.cfpa.net)

July 6, 2020

The Honorable Eloise Gómez Reyes, Chairperson  
Assembly Human Services Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 124  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 33 (Skinner) – Online EBT Purchases – SUPPORT**

Dear Chairperson Reyes:

On behalf of California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA), I write to express support for Senate Bill 33 (Skinner), which would require California to take steps in response to recent changes in federal law relating to the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system and forthcoming regulations that are expected to be issued by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) following completion of EBT online purchase pilots.

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. For over 25 years, we have worked to improve access to the federal nutrition programs, including CalFresh, our largest and most effective anti-hunger program.

CalFresh, CalWORKs and General Assistance / General Relief benefits are issued through EBT. On February 7, 2014, President Barack Obama signed the House Resolution 2642 Conference Report (P.L. 113-79), known as the Agricultural Act of 2014, which included a mandate that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) conduct a pilot to test the feasibility and implications of allowing retail stores to accept SNAP benefits through online transactions. The Act required the USDA to report back to Congress following the pilot before being authorized to launch nationwide. However, on December 20, 2018, President Donald J. Trump signed House Resolution 2 (P.L. 115-334), the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. Section 4001 of the Act requires nationwide implementation of the online

acceptance of SNAP benefits after the pilots required by the 2014 Farm Bill are complete without a report to Congress.

During the Covid-19 public health crisis, the Trump Administration implemented a state-by-state approval for online SNAP EBT and California began allowing EBT online purchases through two retailers: Amazon and WalMart. It did so without rulemaking or the ability for the experiences of EBT recipients to be recorded or considered. Thus far, there have been no consumer advocates participating in the pilot process or pandemic rollout in over a dozen states. While we are grateful for the expediency with which State, Federal and private partners worked in order to ensure an online and home-delivered option for SNAP recipients during the pandemic, we also believe it is essential to convene a broad group of stakeholders to prepare next steps in online EBT expansion and development to prevent unintended harmful impacts on low-income consumers and their communities.

SB 33 will help ensure that the transition to online EBT purchases is the best it can be for low-income consumers. For these reasons, CFPA supports SB 33 and urges your 'Aye' vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jared Call".

Jared Call, California Food Policy Advocates

CC: Office of Senator Nancy Skinner (Author)  
Jessica Bartholow, Western Center on Law and Poverty (Sponsor)