

March 22, 2013

The Honorable Mark Stone
Chair, Assembly Human Services Committee
State Capitol, Room 124
Sacramento, CA 94249



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Re: Support for AB 364 (Calderon)

Dear Chairperson Stone:

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) is writing in support of AB 364, a bill that would require the Department of Social Services to visit a community care facility no less often than once every two years instead of the current five years.

CFPA is a statewide non-profit 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 main areas of focus is ensuring child care settings are providing an environment where healthy foods and beverages are being offered. We employ a variety of strategies (e.g., legislative advocacy, administrative advocacy, and research) to achieve our goals and mission.

In 2010, CFPA sponsored AB 2084, the Healthy Beverages Law, which requires child care providers to serve only healthy beverages to the kids in their care. To better understand the impact of the Healthy Beverages Law, CFPA conducted a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation-funded study in partnership with UC Berkeley's Atkins Center for Weight and Health and Samuels & Associates. A key finding was a meager 50 percent compliance rate. A variety of recommendations were identified to shrink this compliance gap, including the increased regularity of state monitoring.

Monitoring of licensed child care facilities is an essential function of the state department in order to ensure the basic health and safety needs of children in care are met. Unfortunately, budget cuts over the past few years and compliance procedures have resulted in a process that provides inadequate oversight and monitoring of child care facilities. In fact, Child Care Aware, a national early care and education organization, ranked California in last place for meeting basic standards of child care oversight and regulation.

For these reasons and more, CFPA supports AB 364 and urges your "aye" vote on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elyse Vitale".

Elyse Homel Vitale, MPH
Nutrition Policy Advocate
California Food Policy Advocates