



March 28, 2018

Honourable Blanca Rubio
Chairperson, Assembly Human Services Committee
State Capitol, Room 5175
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SUPPORT AB 3033 (Maienschein) – Simplified CalFresh Application Filing Act of 2018

Dear Chairperson Rubio:

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) supports AB 3033 (Maienschein) that allows health insurance applicants applying through the Covered California Health Exchange who also wish to apply for CalFresh to have their Covered California health insurance assistance application treated as an application for CalFresh and provide the applicable County Welfare Department (CWD) with CalFresh relevant information during the CalFresh interview.

California Food Policy Advocates (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 twenty-five years, we have advocated for improved access and participation in the federal nutrition programs, including CalFresh, the state's largest and most effective food assistance program.

Despite having the highest poverty rate in the nation when measured by the Supplemental Poverty Measure,¹ California has one of the lowest rates of participation in CalFresh among all states, according to USDA.² CalFresh participation could be increased through a simplified and streamlined application process using data available through other social service programs with higher participation rates among eligible individuals, such as Medi-Cal. Though this approach has shown

¹ "New Census Figures Show 1 in 5 Californians Struggle to Get By," California Budget and Policy Center, September 2017, available at <http://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/new-census-figures-show-1-5-californians-struggle-get/>

² USDA: "Reaching Those in Need: State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Participation Rates in 2015," available at <https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/publications/reaching-those-in-need-estimates-of-state-snap-participation-rates-in-2015>

promise in California and other states, current state law does not allow the CWD to use all Covered California application information to initiate a CalFresh application without the applicant needing to start a new application for CalFresh. An applicant who may be eligible for CalFresh must insert much of the same client household information available to the CWD twice – first in the Covered California application and then again into the CalFresh application.

AB 3033 would simplify and expedite the CalFresh application process for persons who are potentially eligible by initiating a CalFresh application for Covered California applicants whose information indicates they are also potentially eligible for CalFresh. By making it easier for applicants to complete the enrollment process, AB 3033 would support increased CalFresh participation and improve food security, health, and economic stability for low-income Californians seeking health coverage and vital nutrition resources.

For these reasons, CFPA supports AB 3033 and respectfully requests your “Aye” vote.

Sincerely,

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

Jared Call, Managing Nutrition Policy Advocate
California Food Policy Advocates

CC: Assembly Human Services Committee Members
Office of Honorable Brian Maienschein, California State Assembly (Author)
Olga Shilo, Office of Assembly Member Maienschein
Kevin Aslanian, Coalition of California Welfare Rights Advocates (Co-Sponsor)
Amanda Schultz, MPH, San Diego Hunger Coalition - (Co-Sponsor)