



April 4, 2017

The Honorable Tony Thurmond
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 4005
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Assembly Bill 1502 (Thurmond) – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Thurmond,

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) is writing in support of AB 1502, legislation that would establish a simple, but important change to improve California's direct certification process.

For 25 years, CFPA has incubated and supported policies to improve the health and well-being of low-income Californians by increasing access to nutritious, affordable food. For the past decade, we have worked closely with the California Department of Education (CDE) to improve access to school meals by establishing and enhancing a state-level direct certification system. While CDE has made great strides to improve the quality of the direct certification match, their long-term success is limited by their inability to perform the match in-house.

The state can maximize the effectiveness of paperlessly enrolling eligible students in free school meals and increase opportunities to connect students to the benefits of school meals by simply adding CDE as an agency that can directly perform the direct certification matches. Given our history and experience, CFPA confirms that AB 1502 is a necessary action in order to improve access to free school meals and streamline administrative processes. AB 1502 is also a complementary action to Senate Bill 138 (McGuire), legislation sponsored by CFPA that would leverage a high-quality direct certification match to support the expansion of hunger-free schools.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to improving the health and educational outcomes of California's children through this important legislation.

Sincerely,

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

Elyse Homel Vitale, MPH

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.

Senior Advocate
California Food Policy Advocates

cc: Assemblymember Patrick O'Donnell (Chair, Assembly Education Committee)
Assemblymember Rocky Chavez (Vice Chair, Assembly Education Committee)
Assemblymember Todd Gloria (Assembly Education Committee)
Assemblymember Kevin Kiley (Assembly Education Committee)
Assemblymember Kevin McCarty (Assembly Education Committee)
Assemblymember Shirley Weber (Assembly Education Committee)
Chelsea Kelley (Assembly Education Committee Consultant)