

June 7, 2018

The Honorable Ed Hernandez, O.D., Chair
Senate Health Committee
State Capitol, Room 2191
Sacramento, CA 95814



Re: AB 2579 (Burke) – SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Hernandez,

On behalf of California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA), I am writing to express our support for Assembly Bill 2579, which would streamline enrollment for a large portion of the remaining eligible uninsured children in California through implementation of an express lane eligibility pathway from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to Medi-Cal.

CFPA is a statewide public policy and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of low-income Californians by increasing their access to nutritious, affordable food. Throughout our more than 25 years of experience, we have worked to achieve a healthy and food-secure California. Increased access to affordable healthcare also means improved food security for low-income Californians as it frees up room in already limited budgets to purchase food. With that understanding, we enthusiastically support strategies to connect more low-income Californians to affordable health coverage. While California has made tremendous progress in extending health coverage to California's children about 202,000 children remain eligible for Medi-Cal and not enrolled.

AB 2579 offers up a smart strategy to help enroll a significant number of young children who remain eligible for Medi-Cal, but not enrolled. Based on recent CalWIC enrollment data about 90,000 children who are eligible for Medi-Cal, but not enrolled participate in the WIC program. WIC is a federally funded health and nutrition program for pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, and infants and children under age 5. AB 2579 would implement an express lane eligibility (ELE) pathway from WIC to Medi-Cal, offering an expedited enrollment for all WIC children without Medi-Cal coverage. In addition, up to 13,000 pregnant WIC women could gain Medi-Cal presumptive eligibility through the bill..

WIC ELE is a smart strategy to maximize coverage for children and to deliver on the promise of Health4All Kids. For these reasons, we support AB 2579 and respectfully request your "AYE" vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melissa Cannon".

Melissa Cannon, Policy Advocate
California Food Policy Advocates

Cc:

Assemblymember Autumn Burke, author
Members of the Senate Health Committee
The Children's Partnership (Sponsor)
Children's Defense Fund California (Co-Sponsor)
Children Now (Co-Sponsor)
California Coverage & Health Initiatives (Co-Sponsor)
United Ways of California (Co-Sponsor)