



June 6, 2018

Honorable Scott Wiener
Chair, Senate Human Services Committee
1020 N Street, Room 521
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: AB 2269 (Lackey) – CalWORKs Age Extension - SUPPORT

Dear Chairperson Wiener:

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) is pleased to support Assembly Bill 2269 (Lackey), which would extend CalWORKs benefits to children receiving aid until he or she reaches the age of 20 if attending last year of high school or its equivalent and making satisfactory progress as defined by the school.

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. Food insecurity has poverty as its root cause; and millions of Californians are struggling to both put dollars in their pockets and food on their tables. Through AB 2269, we ensure that low-income Californians, who are struggling to make ends meet and who may not have the privilege of completing the equivalent of high school before they turn 18, receive the critical support they need to put food on their tables.

Currently, CalWORKs program benefits terminate for a person who reaches the age of 18 years old, unless there is evidence that he or she will complete school requirements before turning 19 years of age.

Individuals who have a GED can earn the same level of weekly wages as high school graduates. In today's competitive economy, completing high school or its equivalent is imperative for financial success. Statistics show that sixty-percent of job opportunities in the skilled labor force mandate a high school diploma. A high school diploma can ensure a socioeconomically disadvantaged individual escapes his or her economic circumstances.

The CalWORKs program is designed to break the cycle of poverty. Yet, the current program structure inaccurately excludes benefits from individuals who are pursuing education simply because of his or her age. By terminating eligibility to individuals trying to finish high school, the CalWORKs program is excluding opportunities for economic mobility of communities that are financially affected the most. Legislation should permit individuals who are seeking to finish high school or its equivalent until the age of 20.

AB 2269 would allow CalWORKs children to complete his or her high school requirements. For these reasons, CFPA supports AB 2269 and respectfully requests your "Aye" vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Lee", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kevin Lee
Policy Advocate

CC: Amanda Hernandez, Office of Tom Lackey, California State Assembly (Author)

Kevin Aslanian, Coalition of California Welfare Rights Advocates (Co-Sponsor)
Jessica Bartholow, Western Center on Law and Poverty (Co-Sponsor)