



205 S. Broadway, Suite 402  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
213.482.8200  
[www.cfpa.net](http://www.cfpa.net)

May 22, 2018

Honorable Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher  
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2114  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 3033 (Maienschein)

Dear Chairperson Gonzalez Fletcher:

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) is writing in support of AB 3033 (Maienschein), a bill that would make it easier for individuals applying for Medi-Cal through Covered California to apply for CalFresh.

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.

While the state of California has made great strides to improve CalFresh participation amongst eligible residents, nearly 30 percent of those eligible for benefits across the state remain unenrolled. One of our state's greatest opportunities to connect eligible, low-income residents to CalFresh is by making it easier to apply for and enroll alongside other means-tested programs with similar eligibility requirements, like Medi-Cal.

The Covered California online application platform, CalHEERS, is the primary access point for Californians seeking health coverage through Medi-Cal. The most recent statewide data available shows nearly half a million households accessed Medi-Cal through CalHEERS in 2016. In San Diego County alone, more than 60,000 residents used CalHEERS to apply for Medi-Cal last year. The CalHEERS application platform makes it easy to apply for Medi-Cal by connecting with the existing Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS); however, its creation had the unintended consequence of disconnecting the CalFresh and Medi-Cal application processes. After completing a Medi-Cal application in CalHEERS, applicants who express interest in applying for CalFresh are re-routed to the original SAWS system to re-enter



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their information to apply for CalFresh. This forces low-income people with limited time and resources to complete two very similar applications.

AB 3033 would increase efficiency and reduce long-term costs by allowing Covered California applicants to indicate that the information they submitted for Medi-Cal be used by County Welfare Departments (CWD) to begin the process of applying for CalFresh. CWDs would then be able to use the available information to begin determining eligibility, using the federally required interview to verify and request any additional information needed. AB 3033 would also reduce administrative burden placed on CWD eligibility staff by reducing the number of duplicate Medi-Cal and CalFresh applications that need to be processed.

AB 3033 would simplify the CalFresh application process for persons who are potentially eligible for CalFresh, reduce food insecurity in California and provide long term cost savings to the state. 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 Appropriation Committee Members  
Office of Honorable Brian Maienschein, California State Assembly (Author)  
Olga Shilo, Office of Assembly Member Maienschein  
Alex Khan, Assembly Republican Caucus