



June 5, 2018

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

**Re: AB 3200 (Kalra, Reyes, Thurmond): Support**

Dear Chairperson Wiener:

On behalf of California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) I write to express our support for AB 3200 which will restore the annual Cost Of Living Adjustment (COLA) in the program. This helps the 1.3 million Californians who rely on the combined federal/state Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP) program and have experienced cuts with devastating costs to themselves and to our state.

CFPA is a statewide, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of low-income Californians by increasing their access to nutritious, affordable food. Throughout our 25 years of experience, we have worked to achieve a healthy and food secure California. Improving the adequacy of SSI/SSP benefits will help prevent hunger among SSI recipients.

As you know, SSI/SSP is a federal and state safety net program that provides a very basic income to older adults and people with disabilities who have little-to-no other income or resources. The benefits are particularly important for women, who make up 66 percent of seniors and 52 percent of individuals with disabilities receiving SSI. With a rapidly aging population and rising income inequality, our senior population is becoming larger and poorer. SSI is now more important than ever to people in every community in California and across the country.

In January 2009 the SSI/SSP grant of \$907 a month was worth 100.5 percent of the federal poverty level for a single individual. Since then SSP grants have been repeatedly cut. Individual SSI/SSP grants of \$910.72 are now only \$4 higher in nominal value than in 2009, but even worse, are now worth just 90 percent of the federal poverty level. The one-time 2.76 percent increase in 2017 has been the [only investment since the Great Recession cuts](#), meaning that every other year SSI/SSP recipients experienced an additional cut as grants lost their value to inflation.

**We support AB 3200 (Kalra), which would restore the Cost of Living Adjustment.** By restoring the COLA that had been in place for decades prior to the Great Recession, AB 3200 is a modest but vital step toward lifting everyone on SSI/SSP out of poverty. Following prior practice, the COLA can always be suspended in future years during budgetary shortfalls.

AB 3200 is the first step toward ensuring that all Californians on SSI/SSP are able to lead their lives with dignity. For these reasons, CFPA supports AB 3200 and urges your support.

Sincerely,

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

Jared Call, Managing Nutrition Policy Advocate  
California Food Policy Advocates

CC: Assemblymember Kalra  
Assemblymember Reyes  
Assemblymember Thurmond