

September 3, 2020

Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor
Chair, Human Services Committee
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 124 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 1065 (Hertzberg) – CalWORKs Homeless Families with Children – URGE SIGNATURE

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of California Food Policy Advocates, I write to express our strong support for Senate Bill 1065, which will make substantial improvements in California's CalWORKs homeless assistance program for families with children. We urge your signature on this bill.

Homelessness continues to be a problem in our state and throughout the country. While often hidden, homelessness among families with children is at an all-time high. The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program works to alleviate the problem of child homelessness by providing temporary and permanent housing assistance to families with children.

A 2019 homeless point-in-time count estimated that 8,000 families and 14,000 children were homeless in California last year. The impact of homelessness on children is especially devastating, with issues spanning from hunger, lowered academic achievement, increases in stress and depression, developmental delays, and overall poor mental health.

SB 1065 would make several important changes to the CalWORKs homeless assistance program, including removing arbitrary standards that allow some domestic abuse survivors 32 days of hotel vouchers when they are escaping abuse and others only 16. SB 1065 also allows for simplification of paperwork related to receipt of the 16-day hotel voucher support and allow people to receive extended services if necessary to bridge to permanent housing.

By making these changes, SB 1065 would increase options for our state's poorest families with children while also improving the effectiveness of the CalWORKs program's homelessness interventions. For these reasons, California Food Policy Advocates supports SB 1065 and respectfully requests your signature.

Sincerely,



Betzabel Estudillo
Senior Advocate
California Food Policy Advocates

CC: Office of Senator Robert Hertzberg (Author); Western Center on Law & Poverty (Co-Sponsor); and, Coalition on Ca Welfare Rights Organizations (Co-Sponsor).