



March 25, 2019

The Honorable Senator Hurtado, Chair  
Senate Human Services Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2016  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 735 (Leyva)—Disability Accommodations Notification – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Hurtado:

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) supports Senate Bill 735 would require that CalFresh applications and semi-annual redetermination forms include a question and notification about whether the applicant or recipient needs accommodations for disability or domestic violence.

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.

Currently, all 58 counties in California use the Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS) to manage public assistance enrollment and eligibility. One of the programs included in SAWS is California's CalFresh program. CalFresh is California's version of the federal food stamp program and serves people who meet federal income eligibility rules. CalFresh provides monthly benefits that can be used to buy most foods and aims to help improve the health of food insecure families, by putting nutritious and healthy food on their tables.

Given the high caseload that each CalFresh case worker has, it helps to have an effective and efficient process to identify beneficiaries receiving or applying for CalFresh who need accommodations due to their disability or being a victim of domestic violence. Furthermore, effective June 1, 2019, SSI recipients, who are aged, blind or disabled, would be eligible for CalFresh for the first time since 1973. Many of the SSI recipients may need accommodations.

Currently, initial CalFresh applications, semi-annual and annual redetermination forms in SAWS do not include a question about the applicant's need for ADA or domestic violence accommodations. Due to this, applicants are either unaware that certain accommodations are available to them or have to

continuously disclose that they are in need of disability accommodations or have been a victim of domestic violence when they go to apply for public assistance.

SB 735 would require that the CalFresh applications and semi-annual redetermination forms include a question about whether the applicant or recipients needs accommodation for a disability or domestic violence. This bill also requires that when a caseworker opens a case, the first page would alert the caseworker that the beneficiary has already noted that they need accommodations for a disability or domestic violence. In an effort to reduce costs, SB 735 allows for these questions to be added when the department has otherwise scheduled revisions or changes to the SAWS system.

For these reasons, CFPA strongly supports SB 735 and thanks you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

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

Jared Call, Managing Policy Advocate  
California Food Policy Advocates

cc: Senator Leyva  
Nycole Baruch, Office of Senator Leyva  
Kevin Aslanian, CCWRO (Sponsor)