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June 8, 2018

The Honorable Tony Thurmond
Chair, Committee on Labor and Employment
1020 N Street, Room 155
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support – Workplace Lactation Accommodation SB 937 (Wiener)

Dear Chairperson Thurmond,

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) writes in strong support of SB 937 (Wiener), which would require employers to support breastfeeding employees by having a written lactation policy and providing employees with a safe and comfortable lactation space that meets minimum requirements. SB 937 also requires newly constructed or renovated buildings of a certain size to include lactation spaces, and requires that the State develop a model policy.

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. There is no food more nutritious than breast milk, and we feel strongly that no one who chooses to breastfeed should have to worry about access to a clean, private space to pump milk, and no one should have to fear negative consequences at work just to feed their baby.

Right now, many working parents – especially low-wage workers — do not have access to workplace breastfeeding support, including proper lactation accommodations. California Department of Public Health data indicates that, currently, only half of working parents have workplace breastfeeding support, and that parents with lower household income are less likely to have workplace breastfeeding support than those with a higher income. The data also shows that parents with support are two times more likely to exclusively breastfeed at three months.

Prolonged breastfeeding is important for maternal and infant health. Health authorities recommend breastfeeding for the long and short term health benefits to infants and families. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for approximately the first 6 months of life and continued breastfeeding with complementary foods through at least the first year.

SB 937 addresses the barriers working parents face to continue breastfeeding. We urge you to support SB 937 for the health and well-being of California families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elyse Homel Vitale". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elyse Homel Vitale, MPH
Senior Advocate
California Food Policy Advocates

CC: Anny Fryman, Senator Wiener's Office, ann.fryman@sen.ca.gov