**SAMPLE SUPPORT LETTER SB 33 (Skinner) – Put on Letterhead**

**Send via position letter portal:** https://ahum.assembly.ca.gov/.

**Send a copy to:** Michelle.Sonico@sen.ca.gov ; jbartholow@wclp.org

DATE – Please send by July 6, 2020

The Honorable Eloise Gómez Reyes, Chairperson

Assembly Human Services Committee

1020 N Street, Room 124

Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 33 (Skinner) – Online EBT Purchases – SUPPORT**

Dear Chairperson Gómez Reyes:

On behalf of [organization name], I write to express our strong support for Senate Bill 33 (Skinner), which would require California to take steps in response to recent changes in federal law relating to the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system and forthcoming regulations that are expected to be issued by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) following completion of EBT online purchase pilots.

CalFresh, CalWORKs and General Assistance / General Relief benefits are issued through EBT. On February 7, 2014, President Barack Obama signed the House Resolution 2642 Conference Report (P.L. 113-79), known as the Agricultural Act of 2014, which included a mandate that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) conduct a pilot to test the feasibility and implications of allowing retail stores to accept SNAP benefits through online transactions. The Act required the USDA to report back to Congress following the pilot before being authorized to launch nationwide. However, on December 20, 2018, President Donald J. Trump signed House Resolution 2 (P.L. 115-334), the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. Section 4001 of the Act It requires nationwide implementation of the online acceptance of SNAP benefits after the pilots required by the 2014 Farm Bill are complete without a report to Congress.

During the Pandemic, the Trump Administration implemented a state-by-state approval for online SNAP EBT and California began allowing EBT online purchases for two retailers: Amazon and WalMart. It did so without rulemaking or the ability for experience of EBT recipients to recorded or considered. Thus far, there have been no consumer advocates participating in the pilot process or pandemic rollout in over a dozen states. While we are grateful for the expediency with which State, Federal and private partners worked in order to ensure an online and home-delivered option for low-income, quarantined SNAP recipients during the pandemic, we also believe it is essential to convene a table to prepare next steps in online EBT expansion and development to prevent unintended harmful impacts on low-income consumers and their communities.

SB 33 will help ensure that the transition to online EBT purchases is the best it can be for low-income consumers. For these reasons, [organization name] supports SB 33 and urges your ‘Aye’ vote.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

CC: Office of Senator Nancy Skinner (Author)

 Jessica Bartholow, Western Center on Law and Poverty (Sponsor)