

Senate Bill 641

CalFresh for College Students Act Senator Nancy Skinner (SD 9)

THIS BILL

College students in California go hungry at an alarming rate. The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), in their 2019-2020 report, stated that 44% of undergraduates and 26% of graduate students in CA experience food insecurity. These numbers are even worse for community college students. Food insecurity negatively impacts academic careers making students more likely to drop out before graduating.

SB 641 addresses college student hunger by codifying recommendations by the workgroup on student hunger that was established by AB 1930 (Skinner, 2014). While the Department of Social Services (DSS) has issued regulations based on these recommendations, SB 641 proposes to make them law to ensure that eligible college students have better access to CalFresh benefits.

ISSUE

In one of the wealthiest countries in the world, college students are still going hungry. In 2019, CA's college student hunger rates were 10% higher than the national average.

In the face of this growing problem, the CA legislature has led the nation in seeking solutions to college student hunger. In 2014, CA established a workgroup to identify policies that would increase eligible college students' access to CalFresh food assistance (AB 1930, Skinner). Since the enactment of AB 1930, the state has adopted several of the workgroup's recommendations, but some of these recommendations remain only as regulatory guidance and have not been statutorily mandated.

SOLUTION

SB 641 focuses on continuing to remove the barriers to college students seeking to access CalFresh food assistance. Specifically, SB 641:

- Codifies recommendations from the College Hunger Working Group established by AB 1930 (Skinner, 2014)
- Requires counties and DSS to report the number of students participating in CalFresh.
- Requires DSS to estimate the additional funds needed to serve all college students currently eligible for CalFresh, along with an estimate on administrative savings that would result if the Federal EATS Act by Representative Jimmy Gomez (D-CA) were to become law.
- Requires DSS to convene a workgroup to determine how to establish a CalFresh process that can accommodate the influx of applications received during the beginning of a college term in counties where large numbers of students reside.

SUPPORT

Alameda County Community Food Bank
Alchemist Community Development Corporation
Berkeley Food Network
California Association of Food Banks
California Community Colleges, Chancellor's Office
California Student Aid Commission
Center for Healthy Communities at California State University, Chico
Central California Food Bank
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations

Community Action Agency of Butte County,
Inc.
Community Action of Napa Valley
Community Action Partnership of San
Bernardino County
CSU Centers for Equitable Higher Education
Everyone's Harvest
FIND Food Bank
Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano
Food for People
Food Share of Ventura County
Foodbank of Santa Barbara County
GLIDE
Hunger Action Los Angeles
Imperial Valley Food Bank
Los Angeles Food Policy Council
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank
New Hope Community Church
Nourish California
Nutrition and Fitness Collaborative of the
Central Coast
Redwood Empire Food Bank
Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services
San Diego Food Bank
San Diego Hunger Coalition
San Francisco-Marin Food Bank
Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County
Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Cruz
County
Second Harvest of Silicon Valley
Second Harvest of the Greater Valley
Sierra Harvest
SLO Food Bank
SPUR
Student Senate for California Community
Colleges
The Gubbio Project
The Women's Building
unBox
University of California Graduate &
Professional Council
University of Saint Katherine
Western Center on Law and Poverty
Westside Food Bank
Women Of Promise Resource Center
Yolo Food Bank

Young Invincibles

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