



ASSEMBLY BILL 1178
California Caregiver Meal Act of 2023



ASSEMBLYWOMAN
Luz Rivas

SUMMARY

If children from a food insecure home are hungry, it is likely that the parents or caregivers in the household are also facing hunger. This is especially true during the summer months when schools are not providing breakfast and lunch to students.

AB 1178 seeks to combat household hunger by providing parents or caregivers access to the summer meal program.

BACKGROUND

Last year, California became the first state to implement a statewide Universal Meals Program for schoolchildren. California’s Universal Meals Program (Universal Meals) provides free breakfast and lunch for all students throughout the school year.

A recent Sacramento Bee article chronicled, Sara Goncalves, a Teacher’s Aide at A.M. Winn Elementary, in the Sacramento City Unified School District. Goncalves notes that the universal meal program provides some much-needed financial relief for her since she is on a strict budget. She has two daughters that utilize the universal meal programs where she is able to save \$150 in her grocery bill per week. Unfortunately, Gonclaves knows that for many students in food insecure households, these meals can be the only food they will have that day.

During the summer months, students become increasingly vulnerable to hunger. When school is not in session, free breakfast and lunch meals are not provided to students. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) supplements meals for children through their Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), a voluntary program for schools, libraries, community based organizations, faith based institutions, and government agencies to host and provide free meals to children ages 18 and under.

Recently, California has piloted several Summer Meal Program sites to provide meals to caregivers. These pilot programs have been incredibly successful in addressing food insecurity for the whole family. Not only do these

food and nutrition assistance programs help children gain access to nutritious meals, but they also combat food insecurity, promote healthy child development, and remove the trauma caused by having little or no access to food.

PROBLEM

In the summer, households tend to spend more in groceries. Parents and caregivers from food insecure households who depend on free school meals for their children become hard pressed to financially compensate for the lack of meals when their children are home.

According to studies from the Institute for Policy and Research, one in four households with children in California are food insecure. The California Department of Education estimates that over 269,000 K-12 students experienced homelessness in 2019. If these students are experiencing homelessness or living on the brink of homelessness, it is likely that these households are food insecure and experiencing hunger.

Currently, SFSP mandates that only children and teens aged 18 and younger are eligible to receive free, reimbursable meals. This program does not allow for parents or caregivers to of those children utilizing SFSP to receive any individual meal.

SOLUTION

AB 1178 will create a state funded Summer Food Service Program to serve meals to parents and caregivers of children who utilize the federal summer meal program.

This bill will also develop and provide guidance for program operators participating in the federal program on how to serve parents and caregivers a meal at summer meal program sites.

CONTACT

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SUPPORT

California Association of Food Banks (Sponsor)
Alameda County Community Food Bank
Ceres Community Project
Community Action Partnership of Orange County
Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano
Food for People, The Food Bank for Humboldt County
Food Share
Glide
Hunger Action Los Angeles Inc.
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank
Nourish California
Redwood Empire Food Bank
Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services
San Diego Food Bank
San Diego Hunger Coalition
Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County
Second Harvest of Silicon Valley
SLO Food Bank
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