

# AB 1734

## The Count Hunger Act



ASSEMBLYMEMBER \_\_\_\_\_ DISTRICT 19

**Catherine Stefani**

### SUMMARY

AB1734 (The Count Hunger Act) responds to the federal government's elimination of national hunger data by creating a two-year pilot program that funds California's food insecurity research and expands coverage to middle-income families earning up to 400% of the poverty level. Ensuring California can track how federal policy changes — including HR1's proposed cuts to SNAP and nutrition education — affect hunger across income levels, providing critical data while the state advocates for restored federal research capacity.

### BACKGROUND

In October 2025, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the discontinuation of funding for the nation's most comprehensive and consistent source of data on food insecurity - the [USDA Hunger Survey](#) (Annual Household Food Security Survey or CPS – FSS). For three decades, this study provided the empirical foundation for major analyses such as [Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap](#) and guided numerous state and food insecurity research nationwide.

[The California Health Interview Survey \(CHIS\)](#) fills a critical gap. UCLA administers this survey to 25,000 households annually, collecting data on income, demographics, health, and food insecurity that directly shapes

safety net policies and resource allocation. Yet, despite its importance, funding for future CHIS surveys is uncertain.

CHIS previously administered the food security screener only to California households below 200% FPL, approximately \$64,000 for a family of four. This cutoff excludes a substantial share of Californians living above 200% FPL yet below their county's cost-of-living threshold, which has been identified as [the majority of working households](#). According to [the Brookings Institution](#), 1/3 of all households that are food insecure are above the 200% FPL. Expanding screening to households up to 400% FPL would enable CHIS to assess food insecurity among middle-income economically vulnerable families.

With the loss of the USDA Hunger Survey and the uncertainty around future CHIS funding, California will soon lack the data needed to understand the effects of large-scale federal policy changes on vulnerable populations throughout the state. California lacks the data needed to evaluate the real-world effects of federal policies, such as those in HR1, even as the state advocated for the restoration of national food insecurity research.

## **THIS BILL**

The Count Hunger Act creates a pilot program to secure funding for the food insecurity portion of CHIS and expand screening to include all households up to 400% of FPL for two survey years (2027–2028). It also requires the publishing of statewide and localized data on the existing publicly accessible AskCHIS reporting tool. This approach ensures that critical data will remain available in California to inform policymaking and action to combat hunger.

## **SUPPORT**

- **San Francisco-Marin Food Bank (Co-Sponsor)**
- **California Association of Food Banks (Co-Sponsor)**
- AARP
- Board of Supervisors for the City and County of San Francisco
- Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco
- California Food and Farming Network
- California Food Recovery Coalition
- California Immigrant Policy Center
- Californians Against Waste
- Californians for SSI
- Children's Council of San Francisco
- City and County of San Francisco
- Community Action Marin
- County of Marin
- County of Napa
- Doordash
- Edgewood Center for Children and Families
- EXTRAFOOD
- First 5 LA
- Five Keys
- Food for People, the Bank for Humboldt County
- Glad Tidings Church—Assemblies of God
- GLIDE
- Jewish Family and Children's Services of San Francisco, The Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties
- Justice in Aging
- Los Angeles Regional Food Bank
- Marin County Board of Supervisors
- Marin Food Policy Council
- Menorah Park
- Mission Language Vocational School
- Napa County
- North Marin Community Services
- Nourish California
- Ritter Center
- Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County and Silicon Valley
- Stopwaste
- The Richmond Neighborhood Center

## **STAFF CONTACT**

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