



# Assemblymember Lisa Calderon, 56<sup>th</sup> District

## AB 2299 – CARET: CA Antihunger Response and Employment Training Act

### SUMMARY

Assembly Bill 2299 would establish a state-funded food benefits program, known as the California Antihunger Response and Employment Training Act (CARET), to support Californians who lose CalFresh eligibility due to federal food benefit time-limit rules and immigrant eligibility changes.

### BACKGROUND

In July 2025, President Trump signed House Resolution 1 (HR 1). This bill included severe cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known as CalFresh in California. HR 1 reduced food assistance for millions of families by limiting eligibility, expanding who is subject to time limits, reducing benefits and services, and shifting costs from the federal government to the state.<sup>1</sup>

### PROBLEM

Currently, no one is subject to CalFresh time limits in California, and the state has had a waiver from the time limit benefits. However, California's exemption expired on January 31, 2026, and HR 1's new rules go into effect on June 1, 2026. Under these rules, a person subject to time limits can only receive CalFresh benefits for three months within a 3-year time period unless they can demonstrate they are working a minimum of 20 hours a week every month, or they have an exemption.

As a result of the lapsed waiver and passage of HR 1, the population subjected to time limits expanded to include people who were previously exempt, including: veterans, former foster youth, older adults (55–64), people with dependent children older than 13, and people experiencing homelessness.<sup>1</sup>

The California Department of Social Services estimates 665,000 Californians will be at risk of losing indispensable food assistance because they cannot meet the new requirements, including those previously exempt under the ABAWD rule.

Time limits disproportionately harm communities already facing discrimination and employment barriers. Black and Hispanic communities are more than twice as likely to participate in SNAP than their white peers, leaving them particularly vulnerable to unhelpful work requirements that make it harder to receive or keep this important source of support.<sup>2</sup>

Work-related time limits are cruel and unnecessary. They cause people to lose access to food they desperately need. Many people subject to work requirements face barriers such as unstable housing, health limitations, criminal records, lack of transportation, and caregiving responsibilities—making rigid hourly requirements unrealistic, even for those actively seeking work.<sup>3</sup> Time limits ignore these realities and punish people for circumstances beyond their control, rather than supporting pathways to stable employment.

Additionally, H.R. 1 removed CalFresh eligibility for 72,000 refugees, asylees, survivors of trafficking, and other humanitarian immigrants, starting April 2026. 36% of those losing food due to this rule change are children, and 10% are seniors.

### SOLUTION

AB 2299 remedies these problems by ensuring our most vulnerable communities can provide food for their family by establishing CARET benefits. These benefits:

- Protect the same number of individuals who receive CalFresh prior to the rule change;
- Serve people who have lost their CalFresh benefits until they are able to meet the work requirements, receive a waiver, or regain CalFresh benefits;
- Encourage employment and training opportunities to stimulate the economy.

Through the creation of CARET benefits, California can protect our communities from ongoing attacks on vital social services by eliminating hunger and providing for people during their most vulnerable moments.

### CONTACT

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<sup>1</sup> [The Legislative Analyst's Office Overview of Major Impacts of H.R. 1—One Big Beautiful Bill Act on CalFresh](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Economic Policy Institute](#)

<sup>3</sup> [The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#)

## **SUPPORT**

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California Association of Food Banks (Co-Sponsor)  
California Immigrant Policy Center (Co-Sponsor)  
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organization  
(Co-Sponsor)  
Grace/End Child Poverty CA (Co-Sponsor)  
Nourish California (Co-Sponsor)  
Public Interest Law Project (Co-Sponsor)  
Western Center on Law & Poverty (Co-Sponsor)  
Alameda County Community Food Bank  
Asian American Advancing Justice Southern  
California (AJSOCAL)  
Asian Law Alliance  
AAPIs for Civic Empowerment (AAPI FORCE)  
Alliance of Californians for Community  
Empowerment (ACCE) Action  
Bay Area Legal Aid  
Berkeley Food Network  
Bill Wilson Center  
California Center for Movement Legal Services  
California Food and Farming Network  
California Work & Family Coalition  
California LGBTQ Health and Human Services  
Network  
Central California Food Bank  
Centro Legal de la Raza  
Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino  
County  
Disability Rights California  
East Bay Leadership Council  
Equality California  
Equal Rights Advocates  
Feeding San Diego  
FIND Regional Food Bank  
Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano  
Food for People, the food bank for Humboldt  
County  
Food Share Ventura County  
Friends Committee on Legislation of California  
Fullwell  
G.R.A.C.E. SOCIAL AND MEDICAL SERVICES  
INC.  
Glide Foundation  
Homeless Action Center  
Housing California  
Hunger Action Los Angeles  
Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank  
JFCS East Bay  
LA Best Babies Network  
Law Foundation of Silicon Valley  
Legal Aid of Sonoma County

Legal Services of Northern California  
Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa  
Los Angeles Food Policy Council  
Lutheran Office of Public Policy- California  
Maternal and Child Health Access  
Mujeres Unidas y Activas  
Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles  
County  
NextGen California  
Orange County United Way  
Office of Kat Taylor  
Para Los Niños  
Parent Voices  
Prosper CA Coalition  
Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services  
Sacred Heart Community Service  
San Diego Hunger Coalition  
San Diego for Every Child  
San Francisco - Marin Food Bank  
Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County  
Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County  
Second Harvest of Silicon Valley  
The Los Angeles Regional Food Bank  
The Resource Connection Food Bank  
United Ways of California  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Social  
Justice Council  
Westside Food Bank  
Women's Foundation California  
Young Invincibles  
Yuba Sutter Food Bank