



February 28, 2017

The Honorable Joaquin Arambula
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0031
Fax: (916) 319-2131

RE: AB 164 (Arambula): Food Assistance
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Assemblymember Arambula:

I am writing on behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, to let you know that we strongly support your proposed legislation AB 164 (Arambula). AB 164 (Arambula) would require the Department of Social Services to develop a system to respond to changing needs for food assistance and to provide benefits for specific needs, such as health conditions requiring special diets, or to people residing in California who are ineligible for federal nutrition assistance.

It is of the utmost importance that all California families have access to sufficient and nutritious food. Not only do hunger and malnutrition pose severe immediate and long-term health risks for the person who suffers them, they also have an enormous social cost, as the cost of long-term care for resulting chronic diseases and disabilities far outweighs the cost of preventing them through food distribution. However, despite essential benefits programs such as CalFresh, 40% of low-income households in California cannot afford sufficient food. This problem is especially acute for people who, for medical reasons, must follow special diets, and thus cannot always buy the cheapest food options; and also for those who reside in California but are ineligible for federal nutrition benefits, and thus are shut off from the possibility of healthy and plentiful meals.

AB 164 (Arambula) would represent a bold step in resolving this problem, by requiring that the Department of Social Services assist these vulnerable members of our communities—including the millions of low-income California children—in affording the food they need to survive and thrive.

Pediatricians across the state support AB 164 (Arambula). We thank you for your leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "nancy graff". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "nancy" written in lowercase and "graff" in a more stylized, uppercase-like form.

Nancy Graff, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics
State Government Affairs Committee, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

CC: Kris Calvin, CEO; AAP-CA Leadership; Lydia Bourne