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February 19, 2018

The Honorable Patrick O'Donnell

Chair, Assembly Committee on Education

State Capitol, Room 2196

Sacramento, CA 94249-0070

RE: AB 1871 (Bonta): Charter schools: free and reduced-price meals

AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Assemblymember O'Donnell,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, supports AB 1871 (Bonta). This bill would require charter schools to provide each needy pupil with one nutritionally adequate free or reduced-price meal during each school day.

More than 340,000 low-income students attend California charter schools. Unlike all other low-income public school students, charter school students are not protected by the existing state law that grants students in need access to school meals. AB 1871 would guarantee that all low-income public school students, including charter school students, have access to at least one nutritious, free or low-cost school meal each school day.

All students deserve equitable access to the basic resources that support their success, including school meals. Research and common sense tell us that children must be well nourished in order to learn, grow, and achieve at their fullest potential. No student should go hungry in a California public school.

Charter schools are meant to expand choice in public education and, by law, are open to all students, including low income students. School meals are a critical resource for all students in need, no matter which public school they attend.

AB 1871 (Bonta) would fight hunger, advance equity, and support student success by guaranteeing that low-income charter school students have access to school meals.

Pediatricians across the state urge you to vote AYE on AB 1871 (Bonta). Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kris E. Calvin" with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish at the end.

Kris Calvin

Chief Executive Officer, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: Assemblymember Rob Bonta (author) via Alma Barreras

Tia Shimada, California Food Policy Advocates (sponsor)