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March 16, 2018

The Honorable Dr. Joaquin Arambula  
State Capitol, Room 2160  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Fax: (916) 319-2131

**RE: AB 2297 (Arambula): CalWORKs and CalFresh: Hunger Impact Act of 2018**  
**AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Dr. Arambula:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports your proposed legislation AB 2297 (Arambula). This bill would increase CalFresh benefits to help families afford healthy food, and provide additional funds for those without access to drinking water.

The federal Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) program, or CalFresh in California, has been critical in reducing food insecurity and raising families out of poverty. Children receiving SNAP benefits have better nutrition, perform better in school, have fewer behavioral problems, and have lower health care expenditures. However, SNAP benefits have not kept pace with the cost of food, and the current allocations are no longer sufficient to provide a nutritionally adequate diet. Between 2009 and 2013, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act increased SNAP benefits to help close this gap. However, since 2013, this increase disappeared, and families saw an average decrease in benefits by \$28. About 80% of SNAP benefits are spent by the first 2 weeks of the month, and nearly half of families report running out before the end of the month. This has led families to purchase cheaper and less healthy food options, and turn to food banks to meet their needs.

AB 2297 would provide an additional \$28 per month in CalFresh benefits. It would also add an additional \$15 per month for families with a verified special dietary need, including those who need to purchase drinking water due to high lead levels and those with no access to safe drinking water. These additional benefits would be added onto the EBT program instead of cash, so it would not adversely impact eligibility for means-tested programs. AB 2297 would prevent children from going hungry and give them access to healthier food choices.

Pediatricians across the state support AB 2297 (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 "Susan Wu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Susan" being more legible than the last name "Wu".

Susan Wu, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
State Government Affairs Committee, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

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