



May 8, 2018

The Honorable Marc Berman
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0024

RE: AB 3043 (Berman) School breakfast
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Assemblymember Berman:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports AB 3043 (Berman). This bill would expand access to healthy meals at school by authorizing a universal free breakfast program, as specified, and requiring these meals to meet national quality requirements for nutrition.

Nearly one in four California children are food insecure, meaning they do not have reliable and consistent access to nutritionally adequate food. Children who are hungry have difficulty paying attention in class and have more behavioral problems. Food insecure children also have more health problems, including upper respiratory infections, iron deficiency anemia, headaches, and developmental delay.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, students who participate in the federal School Breakfast Program have higher academic performance and decreased absenteeism compared to eligible students who do not participate.

AB 3043 would authorize school districts, county offices of education, private nonprofit schools, charter schools, and residential child care institutions, to provide universal breakfast for all pupils, to the maximum extent possible. These meals must meet federal requirements for nutritional content. This bill would also expand access to healthy breakfast by increasing grants to schools for expanding their food service programs from \$15,000 to \$30,000, and by allowing schools to purchase and utilize mobile food facilities to meet their food service needs.

As pediatricians, we see the consequences of poor nutrition on a daily basis. The stress of poverty and food insecurity also leads to worse cognitive and health outcomes as adults. Children who are malnourished are more susceptible to infections and take longer to recover when they are ill.

For example, a child I recently cared for who required surgery, took weeks longer to recover because her poor nutrition caused her wounds to not heal well. My husband volunteers weekly at my son's primary school and often sees children who are hungry in the morning and fidgety in class. He has even seen some kids saving food from their free lunch to eat the next morning. AB 3043 would help to eliminate hunger and allow children the best chance at success.

Pediatricians statewide support AB 3043. 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" written in a larger, more prominent script 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; Lydia Bourne