



August 9, 2017

The Honorable Ricardo Lara
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2206
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 557 (Rubio): CalWORKs: Victims of abuse
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Lara:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports proposed legislation AB 557 (Rubio), which is currently in your committee. This bill would require that a CalWORKs applicant who provides a sworn statement of past or present domestic abuse and who is fleeing his or her abuser must be deemed to be homeless and eligible for homeless assistance, notwithstanding any income and assets attributable to the alleged abuser

In 2014, over 20,000 survivors of abuse and their children fled to a California domestic violence shelter. Many of these are dependent on state support, such as CalWORKs, in order to get by, and are especially in need of support when fleeing abuse and domestic violence. While CalWORKs currently offers waivers for many program requirements for abuse victims, these waivers are only granted on a case-by-case basis. Moreover, under current practice, waivers are only granted to those who are prevented from fulfilling the welfare-to-work requirement due to domestic violence—not to all those who must escape abuse. We should help all victims of abuse and domestic violence and their families to escape their dangerous home situations, not just those who cannot find or maintain employment as a result of what they have suffered.

AB 557 (Rubio) would rectify this by requiring that all abuse survivors receiving CalWORKs benefits be eligible for homeless benefits. This would help ensure that survivors of domestic violence and abuse are adequately supported in their efforts to help their families escape violence.

Pediatricians urge an AYE vote on AB 557 (Rubio). We thank you for your public service and 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 a more legible style than the last name "Graff", which has a large, stylized flourish at the end.

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

CC: The Honorable Blanca Rubio; Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee; Kris Calvin, CEO, AAP-CA;
AAP-CA Leadership; Lydia Bourne