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March 10, 2017

The Honorable Blanca E. Rubio  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0048  
Fax: (916) 319-2148

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

Dear Assemblymember Rubio:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports your proposed legislation AB 557 (Rubio). This bill would require that CalWORKs requirements be waived for survivors of abuse if those requirements would put the family at risk of harm, unfairly penalize the family, or make it more difficult for the family to escape abuse.

In 2014, over 20,000 survivors of abuse and their children fled to a California domestic violence shelter. Many of these women and children 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 women 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 given waivers of any requirements that make it harder to escape abuse, such as proof of paternity or welfare-to-work. This would help ensure that survivors of domestic violence and abuse are adequately supported in their efforts to help their families escape violence.

Pediatricians strongly support 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 larger, more prominent script than the last name "Graff".

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