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March 13, 2017

The Honorable Autumn Burke  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249  
Fax: (916) 319-2162

RE: AB 818 (Burke): CalWORKs: Welfare to Work AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Assemblywoman Burke:

I am writing on behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, to let you know that we strongly support your proposed resolution AB 818 (Burke). This bill would extend the 24-month limit for adult eligibility for CalWORKs benefits for those participants who work towards their high school degree, enabling them to continue participating in welfare-to-work activities while completing their diploma or GED.

It is extremely difficult to find suitable employment without a high school diploma or higher. It is no coincidence that half of CalWORKs participants are not high school graduates: low education levels trap even hardworking people in a cycle of poverty from which it is difficult to escape. This has severe consequences not only for the individual in question, but also for their families: children growing up in poverty often experience numerous, at times severe effects on their health and well-being that can persist into adulthood. But while there are many incentives to pursue education, many Californians also face great barriers to continuing in school. Most notably, those who do not have a financial cushion that would enable them to reduce work hours or bear the costs that are associated with pursuing a diploma, such as childcare or transportation, often find it difficult to continue with their education despite the fact that they and their families have the most to gain from it.

AB 818 (Burke) would help families on CalWORKs move towards self-sufficiency by allowing those who pursue a high school education to “extend the clock” while they finish their degree. This would help thousands of California children whose parents would be more able to provide them with food, shelter, and stability.

Pediatricians across the state support AB 818 (Burke). We thank you for your leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,



Jacques Corriveau, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Chair, State Government Affairs Committee, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

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