



May 19, 2017

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
State Capitol, Room 2059
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: (916) 327-1997

RE: SB 782 (Skinner): California Grown Fresh School Meals Grant Program Act
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Senator Skinner:

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 legislation SB 782 (Skinner). This bill would establish the California Grown Fresh School Meals Grant Program, which is designed to improve the quality of school meals by increasing the number of school meals that are freshly prepared and made from Californian-grown agricultural products.

School meals reach more than 3 million California school children on an average school day. For the millions of low-income California families who qualify for free or reduced-price school meals, the food their children receive in school may be their only chance at a healthy meal on any given day. However, it is often difficult for districts to provide school meals that are freshly prepared or made from ingredients grown in the state. Providing fresh fruits and vegetables to school children of all backgrounds should be a priority if we care about children's health: research suggests that fruits and vegetables are most nutritious when vine-ripened and eaten shortly after harvest. They certainly taste better, making it more likely that kids will enjoy eating their veggies—and thus eat more of them. Additionally, locally sourced ingredients have a lower carbon footprint, contributing to improved air quality and other environmental benefits that are extremely important to children's health and well-being.

SB 782 (Skinner) would improve children's health by dedicating state funds to the purchase of fresh, locally produced foods for use in school lunches, thus making school lunches more appealing to children, easier on the environment, and potentially more nutritious.

Pediatricians across the state support SB 782 (Skinner). We thank you for your leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,



Zoey Goore, M.D., M.P.H., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics
President, California Chapter 1 of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Executive Board, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

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