



April 2, 2018

Honorable Scott D. Wiener
Chair, Assembly Human Services Committee
1020 N Street, Room 521
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 982 (Mitchell) CalWORKs: grant amount
AAP-CA Position: Support As Amended 3/5/18

Dear Chair Wiener,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports SB 982 (Mitchell), a critical step toward supporting children and their families living in extreme poverty.


Chronically unmet basic needs experienced by children living in deep poverty not only impact their health and well-being, but also their future potential. Decades of research reveal the negative impact of poverty on children's health, educational achievement, and adult success. Living in poverty causes toxic stress, which inhibits brain development and early functioning. Children who live in deep poverty are less likely to graduate high school, more likely to have poor health as children and as adults, and more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system. Unmet basic needs such as food and shelter, even for a short period of time, damages the chance that a child will ever escape poverty and fuels an intergenerational cycle of poverty. Children who are born in deep poverty are three times as likely to be deeply poor at age 40 than children not born in deep poverty.

The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program provides basic needs cash aid and services to low-income families with children to alleviate the impact of poverty on children and help parents overcome barriers to employment. The CalWORKs program serves 1.1 million individuals in California, 80 percent of whom are children. Yet, the level of support provided to CalWORKs families is insufficient to meet basic needs and lift all of these children out of deep poverty. The current maximum grant for a family of three is \$714 or 41 percent of FPL. However, most families receive less than the maximum grant: the average CalWORKs grant for a family of three is \$556 per month, or 33 percent of FPL.

SB 982 targets deep poverty in the CalWORKs program by allowing for families to achieve 50% of the federal poverty level and giving them an opportunity to pay for basic human needs. Pediatrician members of AAP California Chapters across the state urge you to vote AYE on SB 982 (Mitchell).

Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kris E. Calvin" with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Kris Calvin
Chief Executive Officer, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: Assembly Human Services Committee Members
Office of Honorable Holly J. Mitchell, California State Senate (Author)
AAP-CA Leadership; Lobbyist Lydia Bourne