

March 19, 2019

Assembly Member Patrick O'Donnell, Chair
Committee on Education
1020 N Street, Room 159
Sacramento, California 95814

**RE: AB 16 (Luz Rivas) as amended March 18, 2019: Homeless children and youths: reporting.
AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Assembly Member O'Donnell:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing the over 5,000 board-certified pediatrician members of California AAP Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 statewide, strongly supports proposed legislation AB 16 (Luz Rivas) to address the significant issue of child and youth homelessness in our state, through both improved data collection and better coordination of services.

According to a 2017 report from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), California's homeless population increased by nearly 14 percent from 2016 to 2017. It rose nearly 9 percent over the previous seven years. The California Homeless Youth Project estimates 200,000 California youth will be homeless for at least one day each year. **Yet, according to the California Department of Education, over 400 school districts in the state have not identified a single homeless student.** If students struggling with homelessness are not identified, they and their families will not get the help they need to find stable housing and access other services. As a result, their education and long-term prospects, as well as their immediate physical and mental health, well-being and safety are threatened.

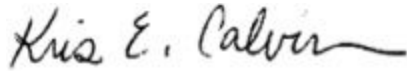
It is imperative that we gain better data on the number of homeless students in each of our schools to better serve them. To that end, AB 16 (Luz Rivas) would require a local educational agency to ensure that each school within the local educational agency identifies all homeless children and youths enrolled at the school, and would also require the local educational agency to annually report to the department the number of homeless children and youths enrolled.

We must also improve the accessibility and coordination of services to homeless children and their families. AB 16, upon funding by the Legislature, would establish three state-level coordinator positions to ensure better coordination, collaboration, and outcomes relating to serving pupils who are experiencing homelessness, and would allocate \$500,000 each to three county offices of education in different regions throughout the state for the purpose of establishing technical assistance centers to foster relationships with community partners and other local educational agencies.

Pediatricians across the state of California respectfully urge your AYE vote on AB 16 (Luz Rivas).

Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of the children, youth, and families of California.

Sincerely,



Kris Calvin
Chief Executive Officer
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

Cc: The Honorable Luz Rivas; AAP-CA Leadership