



April 2, 2019

Assembly Member Buffy Wicks
Capital Office, Room 5160
Sacramento, California 94249
Fax: (916) 319-2115

RE: AB 1229 (Wicks): End Foster Youth Student Hunger in California Act of 2019
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Assembly Member Wicks:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports your legislation AB 1229. This bill would establish the Transition Age Foster Youth Meal Plan Program, through which an eligible transition-age foster youth studying for a higher education degree would receive an award equal to the amount of the cost of a meal plan that would cover 10 meals per week and the cost of all campus fees. This bill would also require the State Department of Social Services to establish a food assistance program for eligible CalFresh households that include a transition age former foster youth, as specified, and require the department to issue guidance to county human services departments to require practices identified by the department to increase rates of completed CalFresh applications and CalFresh participation rates of exiting foster youth.

New research shows a high prevalence of food insecurity and hunger on California's College campuses, and within these statistics are many foster youth who are the most vulnerable to homelessness and hunger. According to California State University (CSU), one in five CSU students experience hunger and one in ten experience homelessness. The University of California Regents found in a recent survey that one in five University of California (UC) students do not have access to adequate food or nutrition. Furthermore, Hope Lab, which conducts research aimed at improving equitable outcomes in postsecondary education, reports that nationwide, half of all community college students are struggling with housing and/or food insecurity. Food insecurity can impair a young person's ability to concentrate and perform well in their studies.

AB 1229 would help reduce foster youth food insecurity by covering the cost of a meal plan for 10 meals per week and the cost of all campus fees.

Pediatricians across the state of California strongly support your proposed legislation AB 1229. 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kris E. Calvin".

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

cc: Office of Honorable Buffy Wicks, California State Assembly (Author)
AAP-CA Leadership; Lobbyist Lydia Bourne