

March 25, 2019

Senator Connie Leyva, Chair
Committee on Education
State Capitol, Room 2083
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 499 (McGuire): School meals: California-Grown for Healthy Kids Program.
AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Senator Leyva:

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 SB 499 (McGuire) granting increased reimbursement for school districts to purchase California-grown fresh fruits and vegetables in districts with high proportions of potentially food insecure pupils.

Childhood experience of hunger has both short- and long-term effects that are highly damaging to the child's health and well-being, as noted in AAP policy: "Among children of all ages, food insecurity is linked with lower cognitive indicators, dysregulated behavior, and emotional distress. Children between 4 and 36 months of age who live in low-income, food-insecure households are at higher risk of developmental problems, which presage impaired school function.... A substantial body of literature also links early childhood malnutrition to adult disease, including diabetes, hyperlipidemia, and cardiovascular disease" ("Promoting Food Security for All Children," *Pediatrics*, Nov. 2015).

Over 1.7 million California schoolchildren are food-insecure. School meal programs are particularly essential to these students' positive educational and health outcomes. However, since fruits and vegetables spoil more easily and are often more expensive than unhealthy, shelf-stable processed foods, many districts struggle to incorporate fresh produce into their school meal options. This limits the nutritional intake of children living in food-insecure households while also preventing them from developing the habit of eating fruits and vegetables.

SB 499 (McGuire) would improve children's health and incorporate fresh produce into school meals by granting an extra 10¢ per breakfast in specified school districts with potentially vulnerable populations of students to purchase California-grown fresh fruits and vegetables. Pediatricians across the state of California urge your AYE vote on SB 499 (McGuire). 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 Mike McGuire; AAP-CA Leadership