

March 6, 2019

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

RE: AB 354 (Quirk-Silva): School meals: free or reduced-price meals: annual report
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, supports proposed legislation AB 354 (Quirk Silva), requiring school districts, county offices of education, or charter schools that voluntarily opt out of the Federal National School Lunch Program to annually report the alternative meal program they will follow.

Children typically consume up to half of their daily calories in school. For some children, the only food they eat each day comes from the federal school meals program. They rely on these meals to give them the right balance of fruits, vegetables and whole grains so they can concentrate and succeed in school. The Federal National School Lunch Program ensures that one in five children living in a food-insecure household have dependable access to one nutritious meal per day. However, some schools and districts choose to opt out of this program and while they still have an obligation to provide students in need with at least one nutritionally adequate meal each school day, there are few mechanisms to enforce or supervise this requirement.

AB 354 (Quirk-Silva) would help ensure that children across California have access to the food they need to survive and thrive by requiring that school districts, county offices of education, or charter schools that voluntarily opt out of the Federal National School Lunch Program report to the state their plans for providing at least one nutritionally adequate meal per day to students who require it. This would help ensure the proper implementation of the state meal mandate already enshrined in law.

Pediatricians across the state of California strongly support AB 354 (Quirk Silva) and urge you to vote AYE. 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: AAP-CA Leadership; AAPCA Advocate Lydia Bourne