



March 19, 2019

Senator Melissa Hurtado  
Chair, Committee on Human Services  
1020 N Street, Room 521  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 298 (Caballero) Poverty Reduction  
AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Senator Hurtado:

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 298 (Caballero) committing the Legislature to ending deep child poverty in four years, reducing child poverty by 50 percent over 20 years and providing a framework of research-backed solutions to make these important achievements possible.

California has the highest rate of child poverty in the nation, particularly for children of color. Thirty-one percent of Latino children live in poverty, twenty-eight percent of African American children live in poverty even though African American children only comprise seven percent of the State's population. Children who live in poverty, particularly during early life or for an extended period, are at risk of significant adverse health and developmental outcomes.

Child poverty has a profound effect on birth weight, infant mortality, language development, chronic illness, environmental exposure, nutrition, and injury. Child poverty also influences genomic function and brain development by exposure to toxic stress, a condition characterized by "excessive or prolonged activation of the physiologic stress response systems in the absence of the buffering protection afforded by stable, responsive relationships." Children living in poverty are at increased risk for difficulties with self-regulation and executive function, including inattention, impulsivity, defiance, and poor peer relationships. Even short-term periods of poverty can expose children to hardships, such as food insecurity, housing insecurity/homelessness, loss of health care, and school disruptions.

The Lifting Children and Families Out of Poverty Task Force finalized and distributed a comprehensive plan with proven, data-driven solutions to reduce California's child poverty rate and eradicate deep poverty in November, 2018. SB 298 (Caballero) will make the task force permanent so that it may advise the legislature in investing in programs to meet the targets established by the End Child Poverty Act. ***Pediatricians across the state respectfully urge your AYE vote on SB 298 (Caballero).***

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".

Kris Calvin, CEO  
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP-CA Leadership