
March 9, 2020

The Honorable Luz Rivas
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0039

RE: AB 1995 (Rivas):Pupil nutrition: reduced-price meals.
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Assembly Member Rivas:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing the over 5,000 pediatrician members of California AAP Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 statewide, strongly supports your proposed legislation AB 1995 as introduced on January 27, 2020 requiring schools to provide a meal free of charge to pupils eligible to receive reduced-priced meals.

Food insecurity — the limited or uncertain access to enough food — is a critical child health issue that impacts children and families in all communities. Children who live in households that are food insecure, even at the least severe levels of food insecurity, are likely to be sick more often, recover from illness more slowly, and be hospitalized more frequently. The evidence is overwhelming that food insecurity can have significant effects on the health and well-being of children and that those effects can be lifelong.

The National School Lunch Program is designed to serve free meals to children whose families earn between 130% and 185% of the federal poverty level, leaving many children not quite eligible for free meals even though their families are struggling to make ends meet. Low-income students must make a 40-cent copayment for reduced price meals, a price that can become burdensome for families living paycheck to paycheck and/or with multiple children in the school system. Based on statistics from the US Department of Agriculture, nearly 155,000 California students may be living in food insecure households and lack access to adequate nourishment. For many of these children, school lunch is the only nutritious meal they have each day.

AB 1995 requires schools to provide students who are eligible for reduced price lunch a meal free of charge, thus removing barriers to proper nutrition for children living in food-insecure households. Pediatricians across the state of California strongly support AB 1995. 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