



July 3, 2019

Senator Melissa Hurtado
State Capitol, Room 3070
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 490 (Hurtado): CalFresh: Benefit Overissuance

AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Senator Hurtado,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California, representing over 5,000 board-certified pediatrician members from California AAP Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4, strongly supports your proposed legislation SB 490 to raise the standard threshold for a CalFresh benefit overissuance collection for former CalFresh participants, and prohibit overissuance caused by administrative error from being collected from a current CalFresh recipient who is receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits.

Studies show that food insecurity is associated with increased risks of some birth defects, anemia, cognitive problems, anxiety, depression and suicide. Moreover, food insecurity is associated with higher risks of hospitalization and poorer overall health and oral health.

The largest food-assistance program in California, CalFresh is an important resource for the children of underserved and underprivileged communities in the state struggling from food insecurity and the associated health impacts.

Whether through administrative error or an error on the part of CalFresh applicants, an overissuance of benefits can occur. In these instances, existing law holds that a family who has been previously overissued benefits but is no longer participating in the CalFresh program has to pay back up to \$125 of the overissued amount. Even \$125 can be a significant cost for families who are living paycheck to paycheck and trying to escape food insecurity and poverty.

SB 490 addresses this problem by prohibiting any collection of overissuance under \$400 for families no longer participating in the program, and would restrict collection for participants who receive SSI benefits. SB 490 will ensure that the CalFresh program continues to protect families from food insecurity rather than becoming a financial burden for them.

Pediatricians across the state strongly support SB 490. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of the children, youth, and families of California.

Sincerely,

Kris Calvin
Chief Executive Officer
American Academy of Pediatrics, California