

March 26, 2021

The Honorable Laurie Davies
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0073

RE: AB-543 (Davies) Public postsecondary education: student orientation: CalFresh
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Davies,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 3,000 pediatrician members strongly supports AB 543, as introduced on February 10, 2021, requiring the Trustees of the California State University and requesting the Regents of the University of California, to provide information about CalFresh as part of campus orientation.

There is a high prevalence of food insecurity and hunger on California's college campuses. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated these economic and basic needs issues for students. A recent report from the Hope Center shows that almost 3 out of every 5 students said they were experiencing basic needs insecurity during the pandemic. The report also highlights the heightened basic needs insecurity threatening retention for students of color. Seventy-four percent of Indigenous and 71% of Black students responding to the survey reported facing basic needs insecurity, illustrating how the pandemic has magnified pervasive racial disparities.¹ Students achieve more when their basic needs are met. Helping meet those needs is an important step in breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

The CalFresh Program, federally known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), issues monthly electronic benefits for food and nutrition assistance to low-income individuals who meet federal income eligibility rules. However, many college students don't know whether they are eligible for CalFresh or how to apply. Making sure that students receive this important information before they arrive on campus will help address this issue.

AAP-CA strongly supports AB 543. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,



Nancy Graff, MD FAAP
Member, State Government Affairs Committee
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP Leadership

¹ <https://hope4college.com/realcollege-during-the-pandemic/>