
April 13, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
State Capitol, Room 5094
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 364 (Skinner) Free School Meals For All Act of 2021..
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Senator Skinner,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 3,000 pediatrician members strongly supports SB 364 as amended on March 24, 2021, which would establish a mechanism to provide free school meals for all California K-12 students while promoting access to healthy, freshly prepared food grown by California farmers.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, over two million California children were experiencing food insecurity and struggling to receive adequate nutrition. Now, as schools are closed and families struggle to pay bills, food insecurity in California has risen sharply. For some children, the only food they eat each day comes from the federal school meals program. The hunger crisis is hitting communities of color the hardest, with Black and Latinx families with children reporting food insecurity twice that of white households. While the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has taken steps to allow the continued service of free school meals, this de-facto free meal service is set to expire September 30, 2021, taking away a critical nutritional resource from children and families as they continue to experience economic hardship.

SB 364 will allow our schools to serve free meals to all students as the negative economic stresses of the pandemic continue to impact California families in the years to come. This legislation will also establish an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) program to ensure that children from low-income families have access to food when schools are closed during breaks and prolonged emergencies, making California the first state in the nation to build on the current Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) program to ensure that kids have access to food while schools are closed during the pandemic.

AAP-CA strongly supports SB 364. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,



Jacques Corriveau, MD FAAP
Chair, State Government Affairs Committee
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP Leadership