
April 20, 2021

The Honorable Melissa Hurtado
State Capitol, Room 4032
Sacramento, CA 94249-0045

RE: SB 609 (Hurtado) CalFresh
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Senator Hurtado,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 3,000 pediatrician members strongly supports SB 609, as amended on April 8, 2021, which would establish the CalFresh Employment and Training (E&T) Expansion and Improvement Program and would include adult education and career technical education programs in the list of programs deemed to meet the student exemptions for purpose of eligibility for CalFresh benefits.

Many students on California's college campuses experience food insecurity and hunger. 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.¹ In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic caused many people in California to lose their jobs, some of which may not return in the near future or ever. Job training and reskilling services can play a vital role in returning many Californians to work.

Current federal law stipulates that in order to receive CalFresh benefits, students must meet certain work requirements unless they are eligible for exemptions such as the E&T services program exemption. E&T offers individuals receiving food benefits opportunities to build skills towards employment. Federal regulations allow students to qualify for this exemption if they receive equivalent E&T training from a qualifying program at a higher education institution. By including adult education and career technical education in the list of qualifying programs, we can help more people take advantage of these opportunities and still feed their families.

SB 609 would include adult education and career technical education in the E&T Program with a focus on regional workforce needs and on specified populations, including youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system. AAP-CA strongly supports SB 609. 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
Member, State Government Affairs Committee
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP Leadership

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