

1 [Supporting California State Senate Bill No. 107 (Wiener) - CalFresh]

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3 **Resolution supporting California State Senate Bill No. 107, authored by Senator Scott**
4 **Wiener and co-authored by Senator Bill Dodd, on CalFresh to reduce the prevalence of**
5 **food insecurity and poverty among older adults and people with disabilities.**

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7 WHEREAS, COVID-19 pandemic conditions are increasing the already high number of
8 San Francisco residents experiencing food insecurity and despite federal and state
9 interventions, the most recent data show that overall food insecurity has spiked to more than
10 25 percent of California households, 10 million people, and 2.5 times higher than before the
11 COVID-19 crisis began; and

12 WHEREAS, This troubling trend has more acute consequences during the crisis, as
13 food insecurity compounds poor health and economic conditions by placing low-income older
14 adults and people with disabilities at increased risk for serious harm; and

15 WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly increased food insecurity among
16 low-income Californians, and disproportionately impacted Black and Latinx individuals; and

17 WHEREAS, Inadequate nutrition and food insecurity threatens the health of 3.7 million
18 low-income adults and over 2 million children in California, leading to adverse health
19 outcomes among children, and increased risk of chronic disease, including diabetes and
20 cardiovascular diseases, yet nearly 1.7 million eligible Californians are not receiving CalFresh
21 nutrition benefits; and

22 WHEREAS, The average CalFresh benefit in California is \$136 per person per month;
23 if the state enrolled the 2 million eligible, but not participating, Californians into CalFresh, it
24 would draw up to \$2.1 billion in federal food benefits to the state annually, which would also
25 significantly help farmers, grocers, and the local economy; and

1 WHEREAS, While working poor Californians struggle with the economic fallout of the
2 COVID-19 crisis and struggle to meet their basic needs like food and housing, California ranks
3 fourth to last in the nation at connecting working poor households to the federal Supplemental
4 Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known in California as CalFresh; and

5 WHEREAS, California’s seniors are enduring the most severe health consequences of
6 the pandemic, including experiencing hunger and poverty; yet, California ranks last in the
7 nation at connecting seniors to SNAP, known in California as CalFresh, despite recent policy
8 changes to simplify enrollment processes and medical deductions for seniors; and

9 WHEREAS, The need to streamline CalFresh application processes is more urgent
10 than ever as the number of new CalFresh applications surges due to the economic downturn
11 and spiking unemployment and with state, county, and outreach partner capacity stretched to
12 the limit, operational efficiency is the top priority; and

13 WHEREAS, Expanded federal authority during the crisis has allowed California to
14 implement several key changes to ease program access during the pandemic and through
15 State Legislative action, temporary improvements to CalFresh program access, and boosting
16 the program’s health and economic stimulus impact can be extended; and

17 WHEREAS, CalFresh has a critical dual role to play in California’s immediate and long-
18 term COVID-19 response as a proven positive public health intervention and powerful
19 economic stabilizer and according to the most recent data, only 19 percent of eligible older
20 Californians (age 60 or over) receive CalFresh, the lowest participation rate of any state; and

21 WHEREAS, The CalFresh Program is the first line of defense against food insecurity in
22 the City and County of San Francisco by providing vital nutrition benefits for eligible low-
23 income households to purchase nutritious foods at authorized retailers including
24 supermarkets, neighborhood grocery stores, and farmers’ markets; and

25

1 WHEREAS, Community-based food programs alone cannot eliminate persistent
2 hunger due to limited capacity compared to existing need and nationwide, federal nutrition
3 programs provide 19 of every 20 meals needed by low-income people; and

4 WHEREAS, The most recent USDA analysis available estimated California's CalFresh
5 participation rate at 71 percent, ranking 45th out of 50 states, and well below the national
6 average of 84 percent; and

7 WHEREAS, Program data from San Francisco's Department of Aging and Adult
8 Services indicate that 78 percent of adults with disabilities seeking home delivered and
9 congregate meal services are food insecure; and

10 WHEREAS, The most recent analysis from the California Department of Social
11 Services indicates San Francisco County ranks in the bottom third of California's 58 counties,
12 with a CalFresh participation rate of 56 percent, compared to the statewide rate of 71 percent;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Recent studies show that access to SNAP significantly improved low-
15 income seniors' chances of living independently in the community and avoiding
16 hospitalization, including reduced likelihood of subsequent nursing home use and reduced
17 Medicare and Medicaid costs; and

18 WHEREAS, The estimated additional federally-funded benefits received if participation
19 reached 100 percent of income eligible individuals in San Francisco County is \$83.5 million;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, The estimated annual increase in economic activity if CalFresh reached
22 100 percent of eligible households in San Francisco County is \$128.7 million; and

23 WHEREAS, A 2010 study by the USDA found that for every \$1 billion of added SNAP
24 funding, between 8,900 and 17,000 jobs were created and CalFresh stimulates local
25 economic activity and creates jobs in the food agricultural, retail, and distribution sectors; and

1 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Board of Supervisors have acknowledged that "food is
2 a basic human right and essential for human health" and thus created the Food Security Task
3 Force in 2013 (Resolution 447-13) with the goal of ending hunger by 2020; now, therefore, be
4 it

5 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors hereby supports California
6 State Senate Bill No. 107, CalFresh, which if enacted would simplify the CalFresh application
7 for older adults and people with disabilities and ensure all applicants and participants can
8 complete the application and recertification interview processes by phone, including the
9 required client signature; and, be it

10 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors hereby directs the Clerk of the
11 Board to transmit a copy of this Resolution to the California State Assembly and the California
12 State Senate as well as the Bill's primary sponsor, State Senator Scott Wiener.

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