

File No. 200525

Committee Item No. \_\_\_\_\_

Board Item No. 25

## COMMITTEE/BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Board of Supervisors Meeting

Date: June 2, 2020

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- California State Senate Bill No. 882 - 05/13/20
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Prepared by: Lisa Lew

Date: May 29, 2020

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1 [Supporting California State Senate Bill No. 882 (Wiener) - CalFresh]

2

3 **Resolution supporting California State Senate Bill No. 882, authored by State Senator**  
4 **Scott Wiener, to reduce the prevalence of food insecurity and poverty among older**  
5 **adults and people with disabilities in the City and County of San Francisco by**  
6 **increasing participation in the CalFresh Program.**

7

8 WHEREAS, COVID-19 pandemic conditions are increasing the already high number of  
9 San Francisco residents experiencing food insecurity; this troubling trend has more acute  
10 consequences during the crisis, as food insecurity compounds poor health and economic  
11 conditions — placing low-income older adults and people with disabilities at increased risk for  
12 serious harm; and

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

17 WHEREAS, Expanded federal authority during the crisis has allowed California to  
18 implement several key changes to ease program access during the pandemic; with state  
19 legislative action, we can extend certain temporary improvements to CalFresh program  
20 access, boosting the program's health and economic stimulus impact; and

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

25

1           WHEREAS, The CalFresh Program is the first line of defense against food insecurity in  
2 San Francisco County by providing supplemental benefits for eligible low-income households  
3 to purchase nutritious foods at authorized retailers including supermarkets, neighborhood  
4 grocery stores, and farmers' markets; and

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

8           WHEREAS, The most recent USDA analysis available estimated California's CalFresh  
9 participation rate at 72 percent, ranking 47th out of 50 states, and well below the national  
10 average of 85 percent; and

11           WHEREAS, The most recent analysis available from the national Food Research and  
12 Action Center estimated California's CalFresh participation rate among older adults age 60 or  
13 over at 19 percent, ranking last out of all states, and well below the national average of 42  
14 percent; and

15           WHEREAS, Program data from San Francisco's Department of Aging and Adult  
16 Services indicates that 78 percent of adults with disabilities seeking home delivered and  
17 congregate meal services are food insecure; and

18           WHEREAS, The most recent analysis from the California Department of Social  
19 Services indicates San Francisco County ranks in the bottom third of California's 58 counties,  
20 with a CalFresh participation rate of 56 percent, compared to the statewide rate of 71 percent,  
21 and eight counties at or above the national average of 85 percent; and

22           WHEREAS, 73 percent of CalFresh participants are families with children and nearly  
23 46 percent are working families; and

24  
25

1           WHEREAS, Studies show that adults who received CalFresh as a child have higher  
2 high school completion rates and lower rates of stunted growth, obesity and heart disease  
3 than non-CalFresh counterparts; and

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

8           WHEREAS, The estimated additional federally-funded benefits received if participation  
9 reached 100 percent of income eligible individuals in San Francisco County is \$42.7 million;  
10 and

11           WHEREAS, The estimated annual increase in economic activity if CalFresh reached  
12 100 percent of eligible households in San Francisco County is \$76.3 million; and

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

16           WHEREAS, The County of San Francisco's Board of Supervisors have acknowledged  
17 that "food is a basic human right and essential for human health" and thus created the Food  
18 Security Task Force in 2013 (Resolution No. 447-13) with the goal of ending hunger by 2020;  
19 now, therefore, be it

20           RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco supports State Senate Bill  
21 No. 882 (Wiener) as written, which would, if enacted: simplify the CalFresh application for  
22 many older adults and people with disabilities; eliminate burdensome reporting requirements  
23 that cause many households to lose food assistance, despite remaining eligible; and ensure  
24 all applicants and participants can complete the application and recertification interview  
25 processes by phone, including the required client signature.


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**SB-882 CalFresh.** (2019-2020)

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Date Published: 05/13/2020 09:00 PM

AMENDED IN SENATE MAY 13, 2020

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2019–2020 REGULAR SESSION

**SENATE BILL**

**NO. 882**

**Introduced by Senator Wiener**  
**(Principal coauthors: Assembly Members Chiu and Mathis)**  
**(Coauthor: Senator Dodd)**  
**(Coauthor: Assembly Member Wicks)**

**January 23, 2020**

An act to add Sections 18900.3 and 18900.4 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to CalFresh.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 882, as amended, Wiener. CalFresh.

Existing federal law provides for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known in California as CalFresh, under which supplemental nutrition assistance benefits allocated to the state by the federal government are distributed to eligible individuals by each county. Existing law requires the State Department of Social Services, in conjunction with the State Department of Public Health and appropriate stakeholders, to develop and submit to the Legislature a community outreach and education campaign to help families learn about, and apply for, CalFresh.

This bill would require the State Department of Social Services, in order to increase client access and retention within CalFresh, to participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project, a demonstration project operated by the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. As part of this participation, the bill would require the department to develop a CalFresh user-centered application for seniors that minimizes the burdens of the overall enrollment process and to waive the semiannual reporting requirements under CalFresh for households enrolled under the Elderly Simplified Application Project.

Existing law requires each county welfare department, to the extent permitted by federal law, to exempt a household from complying with face-to-face interview requirements for the purpose of determining eligibility at initial application and recertification.

This bill would, to the extent permitted by federal law, give an individual the option to apply, report, and recertify for CalFresh in person, by mail, online, or by telephone, and permit an individual to complete the interview requirement and client signature by telephone. The bill would authorize counties to implement any method of

telephonic or electronic signature that is supported by county business practice and technology. The bill would require the department, with the input of stakeholders, to develop and execute a plan of support for counties that have not already implemented a telephone-based application and renewal process and to provide technical assistance and resources. The bill would require the application process to satisfy specified criteria, including simple, user-friendly language and instructions. The bill would require certain counties to comply with these provisions beginning on or before January 1, 2022, and require the remaining counties to comply with the provisions beginning on or before January 1, 2023. By imposing new duties on counties, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to the statutory provisions noted above.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: yes

## THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

### **SECTION 1.** (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

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

(2) The average CalFresh benefit in California is \$136 per person per month. If the state enrolled these 2 million eligible Californians into CalFresh, it would draw up to \$1.8 billion in federal food benefits to the state annually, which would also significantly help farmers, grocers, and the local economy.

(3) While working poor Californians struggle with increased costs of housing and basic needs that outpaced growth in wages, California ranks third to last in the nation at connecting working poor households to CalFresh.

(4) While California's population is aging, with a growing number of seniors experiencing hunger and poverty, California ranks last in the nation at connecting seniors to CalFresh, failing to reach more than four in five eligible, low-income seniors, despite recent policy changes to simplify enrollment processes and medical deductions for seniors.

(5) CalFresh has undergone several significant changes over the past several years, including all of the following:

(A) Reduced barriers to enrollment by removing asset test and finger imaging requirements.

(B) Increased guidance to make online and phone applications more widely available so that residents can apply for benefits without visiting an office, similar to Medi-Cal.

(C) Interdepartmental collaboration to improve horizontal integration among social service programs, including CalFresh, Medi-Cal, CalWORKs, and the California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC Program).

(D) Reversal of the longstanding Supplemental Security Income (SSI) "cashout" policy, which provided a pivotal opportunity to establish CalFresh eligibility for 500,000 seniors and disabled Californians receiving SSI benefits.

(6) Given these changes in CalFresh and the need to connect health and nutrition, particularly for seniors and newly eligible SSI recipients, the time is right to improve CalFresh entry points and remove burdensome and unnecessary reporting requirements that may cause households to lose access to CalFresh benefits even though they remain eligible.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature to maximize the impact of federal safety net funding to reduce poverty, fight hunger, and improve health by simplifying enrollment and maintaining access to CalFresh for all eligible, low-income Californians.

**SEC. 2.** Section 18900.3 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

**18900.3.** In order to increase client access and retention within CalFresh, the department shall participate in all elements of the Elderly Simplified Application Project, a demonstration project operated by the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, including the following elements:

(a) Developing a CalFresh user-centered application for seniors that minimizes the burdens of the overall enrollment process.

(b) Waiving the semiannual reporting requirement under CalFresh for households enrolled under the Elderly Simplified Application Project.

**SEC. 3.** Section 18900.4 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

**18900.4.** (a) To the extent permitted under federal law, an individual shall have the option to apply, report, and recertify for CalFresh in person, by mail, online, or by telephone, and shall have the option to complete the interview and the required client signature by telephone.

(b) Counties may implement any method of telephonic signature or electronic signature, in compliance with state and federal program requirements, that is supported by county business practices and available technology.

(c) (1) The department shall work with counties, representatives of the statewide automated welfare system consortia, ~~representatives of county eligibility workers,~~ *recognized exclusive representatives of eligibility workers,* and advocates for CalFresh participants, to develop and execute a plan of support for counties that have not already implemented a telephone-based application and renewal process, and to provide technical assistance and resources.

(2) The results of this planning effort, including, but not limited to, the resources identified as necessary for counties to implement this section, shall be reported to the Legislature during the 2021–22 budget hearings.

(d) To the extent permitted under federal law, the application process shall satisfy both of the following criteria:

(1) Include simple, user-friendly language and instructions that incorporate user testing with CalFresh applicants, participants, eligibility workers, and application assisters.

(2) Require the eligibility, enrollment, and retention system to offer an applicant or recipient assistance with their application, required reporting, or recertification for the CalFresh program in person, over the telephone, and online, and in a manner that is accessible to individuals with disabilities and those who have limited English proficiency.

(e) Counties currently using the Consortium IV (C-IV) or LEADER Replacement System (LRS) of the Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS) shall comply with this section beginning on or before January 1, 2022, and counties currently using the Welfare Client Data System (WCDS) of SAWS shall comply with this section beginning on or before January 1, 2023.

**SEC. 4.** If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

# Introduction Form

By a Member of the Board of Supervisors or Mayor

Time stamp  
or meeting date

I hereby submit the following item for introduction (select only one):

- 1. For reference to Committee. (An Ordinance, Resolution, Motion or Charter Amendment).
- 2. Request for next printed agenda Without Reference to Committee.
- 3. Request for hearing on a subject matter at Committee.
- 4. Request for letter beginning : "Supervisor  inquiries"
- 5. City Attorney Request.
- 6. Call File No.  from Committee.
- 7. Budget Analyst request (attached written motion).
- 8. Substitute Legislation File No.
- 9. Reactivate File No.
- 10. Topic submitted for Mayoral Appearance before the BOS on

Please check the appropriate boxes. The proposed legislation should be forwarded to the following:

- Small Business Commission
- Youth Commission
- Ethics Commission
- Planning Commission
- Building Inspection Commission

**Note: For the Imperative Agenda (a resolution not on the printed agenda), use the Imperative Form.**

Sponsor(s):

Mar; Walton

Subject:

Resolution supporting California State Senate Bill No. 882 (Weiner)

The text is listed:

Resolution supporting California State Senate Bill No. 882, authored by State Senator Scott Wiener, to reduce the prevalence of food insecurity and poverty among older adults and people with disabilities in San Francisco City and County by increasing participation in the CalFresh Program.

Signature of Sponsoring Supervisor: /S/ Gordon Mar

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