

File No. 210152

Committee Item No. _____

Board Item No. 40

COMMITTEE/BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Date: _____

Board of Supervisors Meeting

Date: February 23, 2021

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- SB 107 - January 5, 2021
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Prepared by: Jocelyn Wong

Date: February 19, 2021

Prepared by: _____

Date: _____

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

2

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.**

6

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 Weiner.

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Introduced by Senator Wiener

(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Mathis)

(Coauthor: Senator Dodd)

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Bauer-Kahan and Wicks)

January 5, 2021

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

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 107, as introduced, 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. The bill would require the department, on or before January 1, 2023, to develop a CalFresh user-centered application for seniors 60 years of age or older and for people with disabilities who are eligible to be enrolled in 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, 2023, and require the remaining counties to comply with the provisions beginning on or before January 1, 2024. 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.
State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (1) Inadequate nutrition and food insecurity threatens the health
- 4 of 3.7 million low-income adults and over 2 million children in
- 5 California, leading to adverse health outcomes among children,
- 6 and increased risk of chronic disease, including diabetes and
- 7 cardiovascular diseases, yet nearly 1.7 million eligible Californians
- 8 are not receiving CalFresh nutrition benefits.

1 (2) The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly increased food
2 insecurity among low-income Californians, and disproportionately
3 impacted Black and Latinx individuals.

4 (3) The average CalFresh benefit in California is \$136 per person
5 per month. If the state enrolled the 2 million eligible, but not
6 participating, Californians into CalFresh, it would draw up to \$2.1
7 billion in federal food benefits to the state annually, which would
8 also significantly help farmers, grocers, and the local economy.

9 (4) While working poor Californians struggle with the economic
10 fallout of the COVID-19 crisis and struggle to meet their basic
11 needs like food and housing, California ranks fourth to last in the
12 nation at connecting working poor households to the federal
13 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known in
14 California as CalFresh.

15 (5) California’s seniors are enduring the most severe health
16 consequences of the pandemic, including experiencing hunger and
17 poverty. Yet, California ranks last in the nation at connecting
18 seniors to SNAP, known in California as CalFresh, despite recent
19 policy changes to simplify enrollment processes and medical
20 deductions for seniors.

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

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

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

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

33 (D) Reversal of the longstanding Supplemental Security Income
34 (SSI) “cashout” policy, which provided a pivotal opportunity to
35 establish CalFresh eligibility for 400,000 seniors and disabled
36 Californians receiving SSI benefits.

37 (7) Given these changes in CalFresh and the need to connect
38 health and nutrition, particularly for seniors and newly eligible
39 SSI recipients, the time is right to improve CalFresh entry points
40 and ensure statewide equitable access by telephone to reduce the

1 burden of applying for benefits and enrolling vulnerable
2 individuals.

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

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

9 18900.3. In order to increase client access and retention within
10 CalFresh, the department shall participate in all elements of the
11 Elderly Simplified Application Project, a demonstration project
12 operated by the United States Department of Agriculture, Food
13 and Nutrition Service. On or before January 1, 2023, the
14 department shall develop a CalFresh user-centered application that
15 minimizes the burdens of the overall enrollment process for seniors
16 60 years of age or older and for people with disabilities who are
17 eligible to be enrolled in the Elderly Simplified Application Project.

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

20 18900.4. (a) To the extent permitted under federal law, an
21 individual shall have the option to apply, report, and recertify for
22 CalFresh in person, by mail, online, or by telephone, and shall
23 have the option to complete the interview and the required client
24 signature by telephone.

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

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

36 (2) The results of this planning effort, including, but not limited
37 to, the resources identified as necessary for counties to implement
38 this section, shall be reported to the Legislature during the 2022–23
39 budget hearings.

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

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

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

12 (e) Counties currently using the Consortium IV (C-IV) or
13 LEADER Replacement System (LRS) of the Statewide Automated
14 Welfare System (SAWS) shall comply with this section beginning
15 on or before January 1, 2023, and counties currently using the
16 Welfare Client Data System (WCDS) of SAWS shall comply with
17 this section beginning on or before January 1, 2024.

18 SEC. 4. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that
19 this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to
20 local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made
21 pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division
22 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):

Walton, Melgar, Preston

Subject:

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

The text is listed:

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

Signature of Sponsoring Supervisor: /s/ Shamann Walton

For Clerk's Use Only