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May 7, 2020

The Honorable Senator Connie Leyva
Chair, Senate Education Committee
State Capitol, Room 2083
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support Senate Bill 1082 – Support

Dear Chairperson Leyva:

On behalf of California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA), I write in support of SB 1082 (Dodd), which would to secure CalFresh benefits for certain community college students who can qualify for CalFresh by meeting certain exemptions from the federal SNAP student rule, if they are otherwise eligible.

CFPA is a statewide policy and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of low-income Californians by increasing their access to nutritious, affordable food. For over 25 years, we have worked to improve access to the federal nutrition programs, including CalFresh, our largest and most effective anti-hunger program.

Nearly one in three college students in [California](#) faces food and housing insecurity, according to the California Student Aid Commission 2018-19 [Student Expenses and Resources Survey](#) (SEARS). The survey, which sampled 150,000 college students from four-year institutions in 2018 and community colleges in 2019, found that students' financial concerns extend far beyond tuition and fees. All California State Universities and University of California institutions were represented in the study, according to the report. The survey also found that black and Hispanic students were more likely than other students to report food insecurity or housing insecurity.

Federal SNAP statute denies eligibility to a college student unless they are working 20 hours a week or more or eligible for one of the exemptions to the rule as listed below. A student subject to the work rule must be aged 18-50 and enrolled at least half time, as defined by the school in an institute of "higher education" and enrolled in a "regular curriculum". A student is exempt from these rules if they are eligible for certain exemptions. One of those exemption is for students



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receiving any benefit that has TANF funds. The receipt of those TANF dollars makes them eligible for CalFresh, if otherwise eligible. *7 CFR 273.5(b) Student Exemptions. To be eligible for the program, a student as defined in paragraph (a) (3) Be receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families under Title IV of the Social Security Act.*

SB 1082 would require that CCC student Promise Grant waiver be modified to assure that it would benefit CalFresh students to the maximum extent allowable under federal law. The BOG waiver application shall include a question about the student current monthly or annual income.

SB 1082 would also require the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) to notify students in their system that they may be eligible for CalFresh benefits in that they meet a specified exception to the CalFresh student rule that makes them otherwise eligible for CalFresh benefits to the extent CSAC has such information. This notification shall be considered verification that the student is receiving the benefit specified in the notice for the purposes of the CalFresh program.

Finally, SB 1082 would require that the various state agencies shall work with legislative staff, student advocates and CalFresh advocates to implement the provisions of this Act and shall meet quarterly to continuously improve the process and respond to new policies and procedures impacting the continued implementation of this Act.

As a proven positive public health intervention and powerful economic stabilizer, CalFresh has a critical dual role to play in California's immediate and long-term COVID19 response. With the number of CalFresh applications surging due to spiking unemployment, it is critical that we improve access to our most powerful anti-hunger program. For these reasons CFPA urges an "aye" vote for SB 1082.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jared Call". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jared" and last name "Call" clearly distinguishable.

Jared Call, California Food Policy Advocates

CC: Honorable Bill Dodd, California State Senate (Author)
Heather Hopkins, Office of Senator Dodd