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September 5, 2012

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor, State of California
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1872 (Alejo) Signature Request from Sponsor

Dear Governor Brown,

California Food Policy Advocates respectfully requests your signature on AB 1872 (Alejo), legislation that will strengthen nutrition in licensed child care in two significant ways:

- AB 1872 sets the standard that any food served in licensed family day care homes must meet the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern, i.e., age-appropriate serving sizes, focused on the four basic food groups (milk, vegetables/fruits, grains/breads, and meat/meat alternates.) This same standard has applied for decades in California's licensed child care centers.
- AB 1872 assures all licensed child care providers – both family day care homes and child care centers – would have information about how to participate in CACFP, the federal food program that offers financial reimbursements and technical assistance to help providers improve the nutritional quality of meals and snacks served in child care settings.

AB 1872 is needed for two important reasons. First, surprisingly, family day care *homes* in California are not currently required to follow any nutrition standards for the foods they serve. At least 19 other states require that family day care homes follow the CACFP meal pattern. AB 1872 sets an expectation for providers and offers parents a level of assurance that nutritional standards exist for the meals and snacks served in *all* licensed child care settings.

From a health perspective, nearly 25% of children aged two to five are overweight or obese; AB 1872's focus on nutrition in the child care environment is needed and appropriate. The adverse consequences of poor nutrition and obesity on health, academic performance, health care costs, and productivity are well-documented. Given the increasingly important role child care plays for millions of California's families, and the significant amount of time children spend in child care, it is well worth the state's investment to ensure children in *all* licensed child care settings have access to balanced, nutritious food.

Second, AB 1872 is an important strategy for increasing California's participation rate in CACFP, which currently stands at approximately 50%. Inadequate information about enrollment and eligibility and

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.

misconceptions about administrative requirements are documented barriers to child care providers' participation in CACFP. AB 1872 addresses this by requiring licensing authorities to share CACFP information during orientation, through regular communications, and on the Department's website in order to bolster understanding of and participation in CACFP.

Increased CACFP participation would bring the nutritional and health benefits associated with properly balanced meals to thousands more children, and it would pull in millions more in federal reimbursement dollars to California. Research shows that child care sites participating in CACFP serve more healthful foods and beverages than non-CACFP sites and generally have better physical activity environments, important factors for curbing the state's childhood obesity epidemic.

Moreover, the federally-funded CACFP reimbursements add to the nutritional and economic safety net for millions of children and their families, help child care providers offer more nutritious meals and snacks, support sustainability of child care businesses, and contribute to the local economy. More specifically, a child care center serving 50 children could receive over \$63,000 in federal reimbursements per year and a family day care home serving five children could receive over \$5,310 in federal reimbursements per year by participating in CACFP. While over \$123,000,000 in federal CACFP funding was provided to California child care centers in FY10, and over \$101,000,000 in federal CACFP funding was provided to family day care homes in FY10, California is missing out on millions more in federal reimbursements due to its relatively low CACFP participation rate. Without placing pressure on the state budget, AB 1872 will help boost participation and draw down these untapped federal funds.

As sponsor of AB 1872, California Food Policy Advocates is proud to partner with Assemblymember Luis Alejo to improve child care nutrition. AB 1872 is a key step toward creating healthy nutrition environments for California's youngest residents. For that reason, we respectfully request you honor and support their health and well-being by signing AB 1872.

Please feel free to contact Ellen Braff-Guajardo, Senior Nutrition Policy Advocate, at 510.301.0824 or ellen@cfpa.net if we could be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



George Manalo-LeClair
Executive Director

CC: The Honorable Luis Alejo, fax: 916-319-2128