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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Governor Signs Bill Ensuring Access to School Meals for California Charter School Students

SACRAMENTO, CA, September 18, 2018 – Governor Brown signed a bill today to ensure students attending California charter schools have access to school meals. AB 1871 (Bonta) rights a long-standing inequity by ensuring that low-income students in charter schools have the same access to free and reduced-price school meals as low-income students in all other public schools.

"Food is fundamental, and hunger doesn't care where a student goes to school," said Assemblymember Rob Bonta (D-Oakland). "I thank the governor for signing this bill because every student in California deserves access to a healthy meal. AB 1871 means more children will have nourishment and thereby be ready to learn and reach their full potential."

In 1975, Governor Brown signed legislation requiring that all public schools provide at least one free or reduced-price meal to low-income students each school day. When charter schools were authorized as public schools in 1992, they were exempt from this requirement. Today, the governor closed this loophole and continued his legacy of ensuring low-income children in California have access to free or reduced-price school meals.

Because of AB 1871, more than 340,000 low-income students enrolled in California charter schools will now have guaranteed access to free and reduced-price meals at school, including the more than 80,000 low-income students who are currently going without. With California's persistently high rate of child poverty- the worst in the nation- many families struggle to meet their most basic needs. For these families, nutritious, affordable school meals are a critical resource for children's health and achievement.

"No child should go to school worried about whether they'll have enough to eat," said Tracey Patterson, director of legislation at California Food Policy Advocates, a cosponsor of the bill. "AB 1871 will help keep hunger out of California public schools."

The bill will be implemented by the 2019-20 school year.

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California Food Policy Advocates (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 more information visit: www.cfpa.net.