



March 14, 2023

The Honorable Dr. Corey Jackson
Chair, Assembly Human Services Committee
Legislative Office Building
1020 N Street, Room 124
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for AB 679 (Wicks)—Food with Care

Dear Chairperson Jackson,

Nourish California and the CACFP Roundtable write in support of AB 679 (Wicks), which would eliminate the unfair meal reimbursement rate gap that is the legacy of historically racist state policy that discriminates against family child care providers. We are proud to cosponsor this important legislation and respectfully request your ‘aye’ vote in support of this long overdue state policy change.

All children deserve to be well nourished and thrive. It is the current policy of this state that no child be hungry while attending a preschool program, and that preschools have an obligation to provide for the nutritional needs of children in attendance. Even with this policy, California fails to fairly invest in nourishing our kids in care and supporting child care providers. Each year, child care providers absorb hundreds of millions of dollars in costs for meals served to children, despite the fact that they are already operating on razor thin margins.

Existing state law also creates an inequitable gap that keeps family child care providers from receiving the full state reimbursement for meals served to children in their care, unfairly requiring family child care to be reimbursed for only 75 percent of the meals served to kids in their care. This gap means family child care providers receive no state funding for one out of every four meals they serve.

California's child care system has continued a legacy of undervaluing and underpaying labor historically performed by Black, Latina, and immigrant women of color. Ending the meal reimbursement rate gap is an important first step toward eliminating those inequities.

Family child care providers face additional structural and systemic barriers to economic success. Most are women of color (71 percent), and nearly half were born outside the U.S. (42 percent). According to the [UC Berkeley Center for the Study of Child Care Employment](#), FCC providers' income levels are often below a thriving or even living wage; median income is only \$16,200 to \$30,000 for small child care homes, and only \$40,000 to \$56,400 for large child care homes. This despite the fact that two-thirds of providers work more than 40 hours per week. Alarming, while providers are responsible for feeding healthy meals to kids in their care, one-third of family child care providers reported being food insecure.

AB 679 will move the state closer to ensuring a truly equitable child care nutrition program that works for kids, parents and providers alike. Good nutrition is the foundation of a healthy start for children, and family child care providers deserve to be compensated equally for the invaluable service they provide.

For these reasons, we are proud to cosponsor AB 679, and urge your 'aye' vote to finally eliminate the meal rate gap and fairly compensate Family Child Care providers for the meals they serve.

Sincerely,



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cc: Members, Assembly Human Services Committee