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## Western Center's 2017 Sponsored Legislation February 21, 2017

Last Friday was the last day for bills to be introduced for the two-year legislative session. Following is a list of bills to help secure housing, healthcare and a strong safety net for low-income Californians that will be sponsored or co-sponsored by Western Center on Law & Poverty during the 2017 legislative session.

### *Housing*

[AB 72](#) ([Santiago](#) and [Chiu](#)) would appropriate on-time funds to the Office of the Attorney General to assist in the enforcement of state housing laws, such as Housing Element Law, the Housing Accountability Act, the Least Coast Zoning Law, the No Net Loss Zoning Law, Density Bonus Law, and others. Co-sponsored by Western Center, California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, and the California Housing Consortium.

[AB 291](#) ([Chiu](#)) would enact significant protections for immigrant tenants, including prohibiting landlords from threatening to call immigration authorities and codifying an affirmative defense to evictions based on immigration status. Co-sponsored by Western Center and California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation.

**Location:** Assembly Judiciary Committee

[AB 686](#) ([Santiago](#)) would establish an obligation for California state, regional, and local governments to affirmatively further fair housing in their decisions related to housing and community development. The obligation would be modeled on, and enhance, the obligation found in the Fair Housing Act of 1968, which is under attack at the federal level. Co-sponsored by Western Center, National Housing Law Project, and Public Advocates.

[AB 1397](#) ([Low](#)) would strengthen state Housing Element Law by limiting the reliance of local governments in meeting their RHNA obligations on sites that do not have a realistic capacity for housing development, including sites that are too small or too large, sites that have been recycled across multiple Housing Elements without ever developing as housing, and sites not served by water and wastewater. Co-sponsored by Western Center, the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, and Public Advocates.

[AB 1505](#) ([Bloom](#), [Chiu](#), and [Gloria](#)) would overturn the *Palmer* decision and restore the ability of local governments to fully implement local inclusionary policies. Co-sponsored with the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, California Housing Consortium, Housing California, and the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California.

[AB 1521](#) ([Bloom](#) and [Chiu](#)) would strengthen the state's Affordable Housing Preservation Law by requiring that rental housing with expiring federal and/or state subsidies and/or affordability protections be offered for sale first to qualified preservation purchasers at market value, requiring the state to monitor compliance, and providing affected tenants with the right to enforce the Preservation Law. Co-sponsored by Western Center, the California Coalition for Rural Housing, the California Housing Partnership, and the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation.

[SB 469](#) ([Skinner](#)) would amend the existing No Net Loss Zoning Law to better ensure that when sites identified for housing in a jurisdiction's housing element develop with fewer units than were anticipated or at a higher income level, or with no housing at all, the jurisdiction continues to maintain an ongoing supply of sites available to meet the unmet need for housing for all income levels. Co-sponsored by Western Center, the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, and Public Advocates.

### *Health*

[AB 1526](#) ([Kalra](#)) would reform California's statute of limitations on consumer debt so that once it is run, the debt is gone.

[SB 575](#) ([Leyva](#)) would provide low-income Californians with free access to their medical records when applying for certain public benefit programs.

### *CalFresh, Emergency Food, Food System and School Meal Legislation*

[SB 167](#) ([Skinner](#)) would improve access for people leaving prison to CalFresh anti-hunger assistance and to Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Co-sponsored by Western Center, Root & Rebound, County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) and the Ella Baker Center and the Los Angeles Regional Reentry Partnership.

[SB 250](#) ([Hertzberg](#)) would establish state standards to prevent harmful treatment to school children when their families are unable to pay an unpaid debt to the school food services providers. Co-Sponsored by Western Center, the Children's Defense Fund and the Food Research and Action Center.

[SB 278](#) ([Weiner](#)) would require the Department of Social Services to establish a cost-effective threshold for their collection of CalFresh overissuances when they were not caused by a client's intentional error or fraud and would require counties to report when mass overissuances were made as a result of county systems failure or negligence. Co-sponsored by Western Center and the Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations.

[SB 282](#) ([Weiner](#)) would codify the CalFresh Restaurant Meal Program (RMP) for elderly, disabled or homeless recipients in state law. It would also require the Department of Social Services to seek approval for a CalFresh Employment & Training subsidized job program. Co-sponsored by Western Center on Law and Poverty, the County Welfare Department Association and the Coalition of Welfare Rights Organizations.

[SB 675 \(Skinner\)](#) is a spot bill that, once amended, would ensure adequate customer service for people purchasing food using Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT).

[AB 214 \(Weber\)](#) would address college student hunger by defining terms used in the CalFresh program to determine eligibility and clarifying law concerning CalFresh Restaurant Meal Program on College Campuses. Co-Sponsored by Western Center, Young Invincibles, Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations and the CSU Student Association.

[AB 323 \(Berman\)](#) would amend current law that requires a county to provide a written list of emergency food providers to CalFresh applicants who request it by allowing a county to, instead, provide a 211 referral.

[AB 453 \(Limón\)](#) is a spot bill that will be amended to address college student hunger. This bill is co-sponsored by Western Center and Young Invincibles.

[AB 607 \(Gloria\)](#) would add the Disaster CalFresh Program into statute and establish various requirements of the Department of Social Services and County Human Services Agencies to improve disaster planning and response. Co-sponsored by Western Center, the California Association of Food Banks and the Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank

#### *Economic Empowerment & Access to Jobs and Justice*

[SB 10 \(Hertzberg\)](#) / [AB 42 \(Bonta\)](#) would reform the money bail system, which discriminates against people who cannot afford bail, to ensure that everyone presumed innocent has the ability to secure a pre-trial release. This bill is co-sponsored by Western Center, the American Civil Liberties Union of California, the Anti-Recidivism Coalition, California Public Defenders Association, Californians for Safety and Justice, Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, Essie Justice Group, SEIU California, and the Silicon Valley De-Bug.

[SB 185 \(Hertzberg\)](#) would prevent the automatic suspension of driver's licenses for people who are unable to pay fines or fees for minor traffic tickets and require courts to determine violators' ability to pay before setting fine amounts. This bill is co-sponsored by Western Center, American Civil Liberties of California (ACLU-CA), East Bay Community Law Center (EBCLC) and Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay.

[SB 190 \(Mitchell\)](#) would remove the law that allows probation departments to collect administrative fees from parents whose children have been placed in juvenile detention or on probation. Co-sponsored by Western Center, the East Bay Community Law Center, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights of the S.F Bay Area, PolicyLink, Youth Justice Coalition.

[SB 298 \(Wieckowski\)](#) is a spot bill that will be amended to address asset building and prevention of asset stripping. The bill is co-sponsored by Western Center and East Bay Community Law Center (EBCLC).

[AB 412 \(Ting\)](#) would require the court to vacate a civil assessment imposed pursuant to specified provisions, if the defendant certifies that he or she had good cause to not appear or not pay a fine, or is unable to pay the assessment. This bill is co-sponsored by Western Center,

American Civil Liberties of California (ACLU-CA), East Bay Community Law Center (EBCLC) and Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay.

[AB 1469 \(Grayson\)](#) would improve access to school transportation services for low-income students, increasing their capacity to regularly participate in school and after-school activities, whereby increasing the likelihood of graduation and lifelong success. Co-sponsored by Western Center and the Children's Defense Fund of California.

### *CalWORKs, SSI, General Assistance and Child Support*

[SB 166 \(Skinner\)](#) would end the sunset on the low-income adjustment for child support payment calculations. Co-sponsored by Western Center and the Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations.

[SB 380 \(Bradford\)](#) would allow, at the option of the head of household, a step-sibling not to be included in a CalWORKs assistance unit.

[SB 570 \(Newman\)](#) would clarify that income derived the Veterans Administration for disability, GI Bill or survivor benefits shall be considered income in the CalWORKs program.

[AB 160 \(Stone\)](#) would improve the work support benefits of the CalWORKs program by increasing the program's Earned Income Disregard. Co-sponsored by Western Center and the Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations.

[AB 227 \(Mayes\)](#) would establish a grant supplement for CalWORKs recipients who achieve educational benchmarks. Co-sponsored by Western Center and the Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations.

**Location:** Assembly Human Services Committee.

**Position:** Co-Sponsor & Support

[AB 236 \(Maienschein\)](#) This bill would make improvements to the CalWORKs Temporary Homeless Assistance Program. It is co-sponsored by Western Center, the County Welfare Directors Association and the Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations.

[AB 415 \(Chiu\)](#) is a spot bill that, once amended, would clarify that someone who is employed through a social enterprise can continue to receive aid even after they income out for up to 12 months. It would also clarify that the Department of Social Services can directly contract with a social enterprise for CalFresh Employment and Training and that the Counties can contract with social enterprise to create subsidized jobs. This bill is co-sponsored by Western Center and The Roberts Enterprise Development Fund (REDF).

[AB 557 \(Rubio\)](#) would require counties to waive CalWORKs rules that were unfair to a survivor of domestic abuse or would make it more difficult for them to avoid violence. This bill is co-sponsored by Western Center, the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, the Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations and In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda.

[AB 563 \(Arambula\)](#) would create the Center for CalFresh Employment and Training Excellence. It would also establish that someone subject to the ABAWD 3-month time limit and related work requirement cannot also be required to work in a mandatory CalFresh Employment and Training Program as a condition of eligibility. Finally, it clarifies that the State Department of Social Services may prioritize use of federal CalFresh E&T funding for certain programs and clarify that it may contract directly with an E&T Provider.

[AB 796 \(Kalra\)](#) would reinstate the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for the SSI/SSP benefit (beginning January 1, 2018) and require a maximum aid payment that would increase incrementally until January 1, 2019, when it would be set at 100%. This bill is co-sponsored by Western Center, California Partnership and other members of the Californians for SSI Coalition.

[AB 910 \(Ridley-Thomas\)](#) is a spot bill related to the two-parent penalty in CalWORKs eligibility determination that impacts parents who are working.

[AB 992 \(Arambula\)](#) would establish the Baby Wellness and Family Support Home Visiting Program, a voluntary public health home visiting program to serve pregnant women and families with infants through the CalWORKs program. The purpose of this program would be to improve the health and family outcomes of children born into deep poverty and support work and educational outcomes of these families. This bill is co-sponsored by Western Center and the Children's Defense Fund of California.

[AB 1604 \(Nazarian\)](#) This bill would provide that if a CalWORKs recipient has not received his or her high school diploma or its equivalent, he or she may participate in a high school equivalency program instead of participating in a job search or job club and prohibit the county from requiring the recipient to participate in an assessment before the recipient may engage in a high school equivalency program in satisfaction of welfare-to-work requirements.

**Location:** Introduced - Pending Referral - Pending Referral

**Position:** Co-Sponsor & Support

**Contact Our Sacramento Advocates:** For more information about Western Center and our advocacy priorities, go to [www.wclp.org](http://www.wclp.org).

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