

**Organizational Signatures continued**

## **An Open Letter to All Members of the California Congressional Delegation**

January 18, 2017

Dear Senate and House Members of the California Delegation:

The 130 undersigned California organizations write to thank you for your unwavering support of federal nutrition programs and to urge your resolve to strengthen and protect these programs against any cuts or change in entitlement structure in 2017 and beyond.

There are far too many people in this country struggling with hunger – 42 million, including 13 million children. USDA's Economic Research Service reports that [12.8 percent of Californians](#) suffer from food insecurity. Many of these people turn to government and private programs to prevent hunger, but our local food pantries and congregate meal programs report they are already at capacity and will be unable to respond adequately to federal cuts.

While this high incidence of hunger is disgraceful, it would be even worse by far were it not for the nation's profoundly successful and cost-effective national anti-hunger safety-net programs: The [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#), known as [CalFresh in California](#); the [National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs](#); the [Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\)](#) that provides nutrition in child care, adult care, afterschool snack and supper programs; Summer Food programs; The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for [Women, Infant and Children \(WIC\)](#); [Elderly Adult Feeding Programs](#) and the [Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program \(TEFAP\)](#).

### ***Effective Federal Anti-Hunger Programs Should Be Strengthened***

Federal anti-hunger programs like the National School Lunch Program and SNAP are essential, not only to prevent hunger and some of the worst outcomes of poverty, but also for communities and retailers who depend on shoppers paying with SNAP when their income falls short. Whatever the fine print, slashing our anti-hunger safety net would be devastating for California.

- Since [every \\$1 billion in SNAP benefits creates at least 10,000 jobs](#), benefit erosion and loss of entitlement from restructuring SNAP would significantly impact jobs in the farming and retail industries in the California.
- Nutrition and health safety net programs protect millions of Californians from the long-lasting harm of poverty. These programs largely serve working families and are the most effective tools at preventing deep poverty. Undermining federal protections against the long arm of deep poverty is dangerous.
- Federal anti-hunger programs are most important during economic downturns, [a lesson we learned during the Great Recession](#). Undermining the federal right to anti-hunger benefits weakens the ability of the programs to respond to recessionary times.

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**House Leadership has Supported Restructuring that Would Be Devastating for California**

This past summer, the United States House Speaker Paul Ryan [unveiled his long-awaited economic plan that will include several policies posited to address poverty](#). While this plan did not describe many policy details, Speaker Ryan's previous plans and statements, including several made during his [Poverty Summit held last summer](#), provide alarming context. The Speaker's 2014 proposal [for block granting \(sometimes referred to as flexible spending\) Medicare and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#) would have cut \$1 trillion from those programs over 10 years. Recently, in the [House Child Nutrition Reauthorization](#), he proposed removing national entitlement to and protections against discrimination in the National School Lunch Program. These programs support the health and well-being of millions of Californians, and any move to change the entitlement structure would be devastating for families who rely on these benefits to make ends meet and to our state's economy.

**History Shows that Block Grants Will Block Opportunity to Exit Poverty**

2016 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 (PROWA), which infamously 'ended welfare as we knew it' and [Aid to Families with Dependent Children \(AFDC\)](#) protections against deep poverty for America's children. Instead, PROWA established block grants through the Temporary Aid to Needy Family (TANF) program, known as CalWORKs in California. In many states across the country, this structural change has had [devastating long-term consequences for children](#) growing up in families with little or no cash income to meet basic needs. Even those who played a central role in crafting PROWA have recently [suggested that its impact on children and families has been too harsh](#).

**This is why we are asking California's Congressional Delegation to act to strengthen, not weaken, national anti-hunger programs and to oppose block granting and any form of structural change in these programs.**

***For more information about this statement, contact: Jessica Bartholow, Western Center on Law and Poverty at [jbartholow@wclp.org](mailto:jbartholow@wclp.org); Andrew Cheyne, California Association of Food Banks at [andrew@cafoodbanks.org](mailto:andrew@cafoodbanks.org); Kevin Aslanian at the Coalition of Welfare Rights Organizations at [kevin.aslanian@ccwro.org](mailto:kevin.aslanian@ccwro.org); or, Elyse Homel Vitale, California Food Policy Advocates at [elyse@cfpa.net](mailto:elyse@cfpa.net). To see the National Anti-Hunger Organizations (NAHO) statement and add your organization's name to the National letter to Congress being circulated by the [Food Research and Action Center \(FRAC\)](#), go here: [http://org2.salsalabs.com/o/5118/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action\\_KEY=23994](http://org2.salsalabs.com/o/5118/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=23994)***

**130 Organizational Signatures**

2-1-1 Orange County  
Agricultural Institute of Marin  
Alameda County Community Food Bank  
Alameda Food Bank  
Asian Pacific American Community Center  
Bay Area Community Services  
Bayview Senior Services  
Berkeley Food Pantry

**Organizational Signatures continued**

California Association of Food Banks  
California Child Care Resource & Referral NETWORK  
California Food Policy Advocates  
California Hunger Action Coalition  
California League of Food Processors  
California Partnership  
California State Student Association  
California WIC Association  
Children Now  
Children's Defense Fund-California  
City Heights Community Development Corporation  
Clinica Sierra Vista  
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations, Inc.  
Community Action Marin  
Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK)  
Community Action Partnership of Orange County  
Community Services Unlimited Inc.  
County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA)  
Disability Rights California  
Donaldina Cameron House  
East Bay Agency for Children  
East Oakland Boxing Association  
Ecology Center  
Emeryville Citizens Assistance Program - ECAP  
Ensuring Opportunity Campaign to End Poverty in Contra Costa County  
Episcopal Community Services of San Francisco  
Evergreen Child Care, Inc.  
Family Economic Security Partnership  
Feeding America Riverside | San Bernardino  
Feeding San Diego  
Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County  
Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano  
Food Empowerment Project  
Food for People, Inc.  
Fresh Approach Inc.  
Fresno Hunger Count  
Fresno Metro Ministry  
GLIDE Foundation  
Golden Gate Restaurant Association  
Good Samaritan Family Resource Center, Inc.  
Grace Baptist Church Oakland/Bay Area  
Greater Faith Missionary Baptist Church-Pittsburg, CA  
Groceryships

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HealthRIGHT 360 (includes Lyon-Martin Health Services)  
Healthy Eating Active Living San Luis Obispo County (HEAL SLO)  
Help Me Help You  
Hillcrest Congregational Church, UCC  
Humboldt County Access Resource Center (HCAR)  
Humboldt State University  
Hunger Action Los Angeles  
Imperial Valley Food Bank  
Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank  
Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles  
Jewish Family Service of San Diego  
Jewish Vocational Services (JVS - Work Transforms Lives)  
La Maestra Community Health Centers  
La Raza Community Resource Center  
Leah's Pantry  
Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa  
Locally Delicious  
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank  
Lundberg Family Farms  
Lutheran Social Services of Northern of California  
Mandela MarketPlace  
Marin Community and School Garden Network  
Marin Food Policy Council  
Maternal and Child Health Access  
Meals on Wheels California  
Meals on Wheels San Francisco  
Mendocino Food and Nutrition Program Inc./The Fort Bragg Food Bank  
Merced County Food Bank  
Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA)  
Mission Neighborhood Centers, Inc.  
Multi Faith Action Coalition of Contra Costa  
National Council of Jewish Women CA  
Nutrition and Fitness Collaborative of the Central Coast/ Central Coast  
Healthy Food Access Committee  
Oakland Catholic Worker  
Ocean Beach Emergency Food Inc.  
Operation Dignity  
Opportunity Junction  
Orange County Food Access Coalition (OC Food Access Coalition)  
Orange County Food Bank  
Parent Voices California  
Personal Assistance Services Council of Los Angeles County  
Presbyterian Church (USA)

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Project Angel Food

Proyecto Jardin

Public Interest Law Project

Redwood Community Health Coalition

Redwood Empire Food Bank

River City Food Bank

Rubicon Programs

Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services

Sacramento Food Policy Council

Sacramento Hunger Coalition

Safe Passages

San Francisco and Marin Food Bank

San Francisco Quaker Food Pantry

Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County

Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties

Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County

Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County

Slow Food California

Southeast Asian Community Center (SEACC)

SparkPoint Marin

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church-Marín City

St. Anthony Foundation

St. James Food Pantry-Oakland

St. Mary's Center

TCV Food Bank (Tri-City Volunteers)

Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation (TNDC)

The Women's Building

Treasure Island Homeless Development Initiative (TIHDI)

Vietnamese American Community Center of the East Bay

Village Community Resource Center

Voices for Progress Education Fund

Voices for Progress, California Office

Western Center on Law & Poverty

Westside Food Bank

Willits Community Services and Food Bank

Women Organizing Resources, Knowledge and Services (WORKS)

Yolo Food Bank

Youth Leadership Institute