

Western Center's 2018 Sponsored Legislation March 13, 2018

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 2018 legislative session.

Health

[AB 2275 \(Arambula\)](#) would improve the quality of health care services provided by Medi-Cal managed care plans and reduce health disparities by holding plans accountable so that Medi-Cal enrollees achieve better health outcomes. Co-sponsored by California Pan-Ethnic Health Network and Western Center.

[AB 2299 \(Chu\)](#) requires DHCS to ensure that all written health education and informing materials produced by managed health care plans, whether in English or threshold languages, are subject to a readability checklist and a community review. Co-sponsored by Western Center and the Women's Policy Institute.

[AB 2430 \(Arambula\)](#) would raise the Medi-Cal Aged and Disabled income level to 138% of the federal poverty line (FPL), an amount equivalent to most other Medi-Cal income levels for adults. Co-sponsored by Disability Rights California, Justice in Aging, and Western Center.

[SB 1108 \(Hernandez\)](#) prohibits DHCS from seeking or obtaining a federal Medicaid waiver to require work requirements, waiting periods, time limits, coverage lockouts, or any other condition of Medi-Cal eligibility or coverage not authorized by state or federal law.

Housing

[AB 686 \(Santiago\)](#) would create an obligation under California law to affirmatively further fair housing. Co-sponsored by Western Center, Public Advocates, and the National Housing Law Project.

[AB 1771 \(Bloom\)](#) would make changes the process by which a council of governments (COG) distributes the regional housing need (RHNA) to jurisdictions within a region. Current law requires localities to adequately plan to accommodate the number of housing units at each income level that the COG allocates to them. This bill would require that a COG's RHNA allocation methodology further existing statutory goals, including, among other things, promoting socioeconomic equity and addressing jobs-housing

imbalances, and would provide additional checks and balances to ensure that the RHNA allocation does not further patterns of exclusion. Co-sponsored by Western Center and the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation.

[AB 2219 \(Ting\)](#) would require landlords to accept payments made on behalf of tenants from third parties, including agencies, organizations, caregivers, and family members, provided the third party acknowledges that the payment does not create a new tenancy. Co-sponsored by Western Center and the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation.

[AB 2343 \(Chiu\)](#) would make a number of changes to the eviction process, including extending the time period for tenants to respond to alleged lease violations, such as nonpayment of rent, extending the time to respond to an eviction action in court, allowing low-income tenants to seek a waiver of court witness fees, and other procedural changes. The bill also would create a presumption of retaliation for tenant organizing in an eviction proceeding. Co-sponsored by Western Center and the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation.

[AB 2797 \(Bloom\)](#) would address a recent court decision that undermines the application of Density Bonus Law and the Mello Act within the Coastal Zone. The decision made it harder to use these tools in coastal jurisdictions to encourage the development of affordable housing. Co-sponsored by Western Center and the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation.

[SB 1333 \(Wieckowski\)](#) would address a recent court decision that creates an end-run around Housing Element Law for charter cities and allows them to evade affordable housing obligations. Fifteen of the largest cities in California are charter cities and over half the state's population lives in a charter city. Co-sponsored by Western Center and the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation.

CalFresh, Emergency Food, Food System and School Meal Legislation

[SB 675 \(Skinner\)](#) would ensure adequate customer service for people purchasing food using Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT). This bill is co-sponsored by Western Center, United Food and Commercial Workers Western State's Council and the California Grocers Association.

[SB 1275 \(Stern\)](#) would create the Plan Against College Hunger (PACH) to be administered by the Student Aid Commission which, once adequately funded, would be used to award a college meal plan, worth 10 meals per week, to public college and university students who are low-income. This bill is co-sponsored by the Western Center, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger and Young Invincibles.

[AB 1871 \(Bonta\)](#) would ensure that low-income public charter school students are guaranteed access to a free or reduced-price school meal during the school day, just like all other low-income K-12 students have been since 1975. This bill is co-sponsored by the California Food Policy Advocates and Western Center. More info and a sample support letter can be found at: <https://cfpa.net/ab1871>.

[AB 1883 \(Weber\)](#) would exclude the military basic allowance for housing (BAH) for active military from being reported as income when determining eligibility for child care and early education programs and create a program to provide CalFresh benefits to low-income Military Families who are made eligible because federal Supplemental Nutrition Advocacy law and guidance requires the BAH to be counted as income. Western Center is co-sponsor.

[AB 1892 \(Jones-Sawyer\)](#) would extend Transitional CalFresh (TCF) benefits to individuals transitioning from welfare to work. Currently, TCF is only offered to people transitioning from the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program, but a broader group of Californians are potentially eligible for this federally funded benefit. Western Center is co-sponsor.

[AB 1894 \(Weber\)](#) would address college student hunger by allowing the California State University (CSU) Chancellor to apply for the CalFresh Restaurant Meal Program (RMP) on all CSU College Campuses even if the county does not participate in RMP. Co-Sponsored by Western Center, Young Invincibles, Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations and the CSU Student Association.

[AB 1952 \(Mayes\)](#) would create a process to bring together food system stakeholders to engage and collaborate at the local, regional and state levels to remove barriers to adequate, nutritious food choices and ensure that a vibrant and sustainable food system is available across all communities statewide. Western Center is co-sponsor.

[AB 1957 \(Berman\)](#) would modernize state laws governing communication for public social services, while ensuring the rights of applicants and recipients are protected. Specifically, this bill would define applicants' and recipients' rights to opt-in to electronic communications and to end electronic communication when they no longer want it. It would also direct counties to maximize electronic means of verifying information. Western Center is co-sponsor.

[AB 2152 \(Weber\)](#) once amended, would require the Department of Social Services to define, after consulting with health professionals and other key stakeholders, the number of days that someone would experience hunger before they would be determined "unfit for work," and, therefore, exempt from the CalFresh 3 month time limit for adults deemed able-bodied pursuant to federal law and guidance. Western Center is co-sponsor.

[AB 2297 \(Arambula\)](#) would significantly decrease hunger in California by: (1) Increasing the CalFresh benefit by the same amount it would have been if Congress did not end the boost to the benefits established in 2010; (2) Making changes to the CalWORKs special food benefit so that it is delivered on EBT as a food benefit (rather than a cash benefit, which makes it countable income in CalFresh); and, (3) Adding lack of fresh water and high blood levels as reasons to receive the CalWORKs special food needs supplement. Western Center is co-sponsor.

Economic Empowerment & Access to Jobs and Justice

[SB 10 \(Hertzberg\)](#) 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. For more about the relationship between money bail and poverty, go to:

http://wclp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Bail-Reform-and-poverty.FNL_.pdf

[SB 185 \(Hertzberg\)](#) would require the court, in any case involving an infraction filed with the court, to determine whether the defendant is indigent for purposes of determining what portion of the statutory amount of any associated fine, fee, assessment, or other financial penalties the person can afford to pay. Co-sponsored by Western Center, ACLU, East Bay Community Law Center, Community Housing Partnership, and Committee for Civil Rights,

[SB 298 \(Wieckowski\)](#) will cap how much can be levied from a bank account at one time to ensure that basic needs of the consumer can be met. It does not relieve the consumer of the debt. The bill is co-sponsored by Western Center and the California Low-Income Consumer Coalition.

[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 American Civil Liberties Union of California and Western Center.

[AB 1974 \(Gonzalez Fletcher\)](#) would prevent children from being brought into the debt payment arrangements between a school and their parent or guardian. It does so by banning schools from taking action to collect debt against a child. It also prevents the private information of a child from being shared with a private third-party in the process of private collection of debt. Western Center is co-sponsor.

[AB 2500 \(Kalra\)](#) would extend the interest rate caps currently required for loans up to \$2,500 to loans between \$2,500 - \$10,000. Currently, California law does not restrict interest rates on dollar amount consumer loans in this range and nearly 60% of these loans had APRs above 100% APR in 2016. Western Center is co-sponsor.

[SB 926 \(Skinner\)](#) would prevent economic sanctions on public benefit recipients when they voluntarily quit a job if the reason that they quit a job is that they were subject to harassment, discrimination or other violation of rights established in the California Labor Code. It also requires that County Human Services Agencies provide information about labor law protections to low-income workers applying for safety net services.

[SB 982 \(Mitchell\)](#) would increase the CalWORKs grant to prevent childhood deep poverty. Western Center is co-sponsor.

[SB 726 \(Wiener\)](#) will be amended to make several changes to CalWORKs overpayment recovery policies. Western Center is co-sponsor.

[AB 992 \(Arambula\)](#) would establish the CalWORKs Baby Wellness and Family Support Home Visiting Program, a voluntary public health home visiting program to serve pregnant women and families with infants and toddlers in order to improve the health and family outcomes of children born into deep poverty. Western Center co-sponsors the bill with Black Women for Wellness and Children's Defense Fund – California.

[SB 1105 \(Skinner\)](#) would allow a person who was never in the state prison system to be eligible to get traffic violations dismissed under Vehicle Code section 41500 reforms.

[SB 1428 \(McGuire\)](#) would establish that a work permit shall not be required for a minor during the regular summer vacation of the school that the minor attends, if the minor is not required by the minor's school to attend summer school during that period. It also establishes that a minor who has received a high school degree equivalent is not required to have a work permit. Western Center is co-sponsor.

[AB 1921 \(Maienschein\)](#) would remove the consecutive day requirement for temporary housing assistance and allow CalWORKs recipients to use permanent housing assistance payment towards shared housing. Western Center is co-sponsor.

[AB 1992 \(K. Chu\)](#) would prevent harmful economic sanctions to families in the CalWORKs program and would improve access to healthcare services. Western Center co-sponsors the bill with County Welfare Directors' Association of California and Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organization.

[AB 2313 \(Stone\)](#) would reinforce protections for low-income people who have their benefits stolen through the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system. Western Center is co-sponsor.

[AB 2030 \(Limón\)](#) would require the department to include a question about disability accommodation or domestic abuse status in the semi-annual report for Cal Fresh, Medi-Cal and CalWORKs and would also require that if a recipient has disclosed to the County Human Services Agency that they are a survivor of domestic abuse or have a disability for which they need accommodations, that this information is available on the front screen of the recipient's electronic case file so that it is easily available to the county caseworker. Western Center is co-sponsor.

[AB 2269 \(Lackey\)](#) would increase the age that a dependent in a CalWORKs home can receive aid in CalWORKs from 19 to 22 providing that they are still attending high school or the equivalent level of vocational or technical training on a full-time basis and can reasonably be expected to complete 22nd birthday. Western Center is co-sponsor.

[AB 2392 \(Santiago\)](#): reduces how much tow yards can charge and makes other changes to the towing bill of rights. Co-sponsored by Western Center and ACLU.

[AB 2544 \(Lackey\)](#) would clarify that parking authorities that offer payments plans for parking tickets must offer payment plans to person who got a ticket before the passage of AB 503. Co-sponsored by Western Center and ACLU.

[AB 3200 \(Kalra, Reyes & Thurmond\)](#) would reinstate the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) beginning January 1 of the 2019 calendar year require a maximum aid payment provided to an individual or a married couple to equal 100% of the federal poverty level (FPL). Western Center is co-sponsor.

[AB 3224 \(Thurmond\)](#) is a placeholder bill that would, once amended, codify current federal regulation and state practice by requiring that eligibility workers in CalWORKs, CalFresh and Medi-Cal be done by someone who is a civil servant or merit employee. Western Center is co-sponsor.

Access to Courts

[AB 2376 \(Stone\)](#) would clarify which taxpayers can claim standing to ensure that residents who do not own property or are not citizens can claim standing.

[AB 1526 \(Kalra\)](#) reforms California's statute of limitations for consumer debt (including medical debt) so that a collection agency or original creditor cannot sue after the statute has run, and requires notice to the consumer that a debt may not be litigated or reported to a credit reporting agency when such activities are time-barred. Also changes how the statute timeline is calculated. 2-year bill.

Contact Our Sacramento Advocates: For more information about Western Center and our advocacy priorities, go to www.wclp.org.

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