

Human Services and Economic Justice Legislative Update March 1, 2019

The last day to introduce legislation this year was February 22, 2019 (J.R. 61(a)(1), J.R. 54(a)). Below is a list of bills that Western Center is currently tracking. If Western Center has taken a position, it is noted. Please note that, this year, most all committees are requiring that letters are submitted using the new online portal, which can be located here: <https://calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates/>

CalFresh, Emergency Food, Food System and School Meal Legislation

[SB 173 \(Dodd\)](#) would require the Department of Social Services to create a standardized form to be used by public colleges and universities to verify the workstudy eligibility of students who are approved and anticipate participating in state or federal workstudy and would require public colleges and universities to distribute the form with information to complete the form to students approved for approved workstudy.

Location: Introduced

[SB 285 \(Wiener\)](#) Establishes accountability goals to ensure that all eligible Californians have efficient, equitable access to CalFresh by phone, online, and in person through dignified means and within an integrated safety net that mitigates poverty and supports health. Sponsored by CFPA, SF-Marin Food Bank, AARP-CA and CAFB. More info at cfpa.net/sb285.

Location: Introduced

[SB 265 \(Hertzberg\)](#) would expand the protections established by SB 250 to ensure that a child is not shamed or denied a meal and given an alternative meal when they don't have money for lunch.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-Sponsor & Support

[AB 341 \(Maienschein\)](#) would require an individual's application for health care benefits to be transferred to the County Human Services Agency of residence when the individual opts into applying for CalFresh benefits. It also requires the county, to treat the information as an application for CalFresh benefits and to process it.

Location: Introduced.

[AB 494 \(Berman\)](#) would maximize CalFresh eligibility among people with excess shelter expenses providing that they have the minimal verification required by federal law. Allows counties to request more verification if questionable. Co-Sponsored by the Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations and the Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-Sponsor & Support

[SB 499 \(McGuire\)](#) The California-Grown for Healthy Kids Act expands the availability of universally free school meals by increasing school districts' capacity to provide healthy school meals free of charge to all students through new, additional state subsidies for California-grown fruits and vegetables. Sponsored by CFPA. More info at cfpa.net/sb499.

Location: Introduced

Position: Support

[AB 534](#) ([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 statewide. California Association of Food Banks, California Coalition Welfare Rights Organizations, No Kid Hungry CA and Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-Sponsor & Support

[AB 612](#) ([Weber](#)) would allow any of the 119 Community Colleges to enter into an agreement with the Department of Social Services to establish a CalFresh Restaurant Meal Program (RMP).

Location: Introduced

Position: Support

[AB 842](#) ([Limón](#) & [Eggman](#)) The Hunger-Free Preschool Act ensures that low-income children in public pre-K have access to nutritious, free or low-cost meals, just like K-12 students, and authorizes State Meal Program funding for independent child care programs to serve nutritious meals to low-income children in their care. Sponsored by CFPA. More info at cfpa.net/ab842.

Location: Introduced

Position: Support

[AB 942](#) ([Weber](#)) would extend access to the Restaurant Meal Program (RMP) to all CalFresh recipients who are elderly, disabled or homeless regardless of which county they live in. This bill is co-sponsored by the Women's Policy Institute team of the Women's Foundation of California.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-Sponsor & Support

[AB 987](#) ([R.Rivas](#)) would make 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 add lack of fresh water and high blood levels as reasons to receive the CalWORKs special food needs supplement.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-Sponsor & Support

[AB 1022](#) ([Wicks](#)) would prevent the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Able Body Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) Time Limit from impacting low-income recipients of CalFresh. Co-sponsored by the Alameda County Community Food Bank, the California Association of Food Banks (CAFB), the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Counties and the Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Location: Speaker to legislative Counsel

Position: Co-Sponsor & Support

[SB 1229](#) ([Wicks](#)) would ensure that former foster youth are not denied CalFresh benefits because they have received transitional housing support or chose to take an off-campus internship. Co-Sponsored by Journey House and the Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-Sponsor & Support

[AB 1377](#) ([Wicks](#)) would require a county to deem a child to be categorically eligible for CalFresh if it is informed that a child meets federal eligibility criteria for free and reduced-price meals. It would also require each school district or county office of education to provide information regarding the child's eligibility for the School Lunch Program to the local agency that determines CalFresh eligibility for purposes of implementing the categorical eligibility. This bill is co-sponsored by the County Welfare Director's Association of California (CWDA) and the California Association of Food Bank (CAFB).

Location: Introduced

Economic Justice

[SB 36 \(Hertzberg\)](#) establishes standards for pre-trial assessments used by courts and probation departments across the state. Co-Sponsored by SEIU – California State Council, Anti-Recidivism Coalition (ARC), Ella Baker Center, NextGen and Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-sponsor & Support

[SB 42 \(Skinner\)](#) would establish statewide standards to ensure that jail release times and standards support the safety of people released and the anti-recidivism efforts of the publically funded criminal justice system. Co-Sponsored by the Young Women’s Freedom Center, Essie Justice and allied coalition members.

Location: Introduced

Position: Support

[SB 143 \(Skinner\)](#) would establish a process for metal recyclers to be paid by electronic pre-paid card.

Location: Introduced

Position: Support if Amended

[SB 144 \(Mitchell\)](#) repeals state law authorizing criminal justice fees.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-Sponsor & Support

[SB 218 \(Bradford\)](#) would reduce worker discrimination by clarifying law regarding local enforcement of worker anti-discrimination laws. This bill is sponsored by the Los Angeles Black Worker Center, the United Domestic Workers (AFSCME) and SEIU USWW. This bill is a follow-up on [SB 491 \(Bradford, 2018\)](#) which was vetoed, but the [veto message from the Governor ordered a workgroup](#) of the CA Department of Fair Employment and Housing. This year’s bill seeks to implement workgroup recommendations. The bill is co-sponsored by the Los Angeles Black Worker Center and United Domestic Workers.

Location: Introduced

Position: Support

[SB 321 \(Mitchell\)](#) would require that the participant be informed of the availability of childcare services upon enrollment in the CalWORKs program and at later times when a participant expresses a need for childcare, whereby increasing access to stable, reliable, and consistent child care necessary to improve a family's success and end the cycle of poverty. Co-sponsored by Parent Voices and the Child Care Law Center.

Location: Introduced

Position: Support

[SB 419 \(Skinner\)](#) would protect public school students from being suspended for willful defiance.

Location: Introduced

Position: Support

[SB 455 \(Bradford\)](#) would require enforcement moneys collected by the DOB to be reassigned to be used for grants to nonprofits for financial education and empowerment programs and services to unbanked and underbanked populations. This bill is sponsored by MEDA.

Location: Introduced

[SB 482 \(Hueso\)](#) This bill would create a safe harbor for unfair and untenable triple-digit APR loans. It would establish vague and minimal underwriting standards for these loans.

Location: Introduced

[SB 616](#) ([Wieckowski](#) & [L. Rivas](#)) 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.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-Sponsor & Support

[AB 24](#) ([Burke](#)) would establish a targeted child tax credit for families with children with incomes below half of the supplemental poverty level. Co-sponsored by the [End Child Poverty Campaign](#), Children's Defense Fund and the Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-sponsor & Support

[AB 31](#) ([Garcia](#)) would exempt period supplies from state sales tax.

Location: Introduced

Position: Support

[AB 66](#) ([Gonzalez](#)) would end the sales tax on diapers and reduce the impact of unmet diaper need among low-income families.

Location: Introduced

Position: Support

[AB 227](#) ([Jones-Sawyer](#)) would require an ability to pay determination to be made by the courts for specified criminal justice related fees and fines.

Location: Appropriations Subcommittee

Position: Co-Sponsor & Support

[AB 302](#) ([Berman](#)) would require a community college campus that has parking facilities on campus to grant overnight access to those facilities to students who are homeless

Location: Introduced

Position: Support

[AB 461](#) ([Lackey](#)) would require the Department of Motor Vehicles to allow delinquent car registration to be paid in installment payments.

Location: Introduced

Position: Support

[AB 516](#) ([Chiu](#)) would repeal the ability to tow cars for unpaid parking tickets and DMV registration. Co-sponsored by the Western Center on Law and Poverty, ACLU, the East Bay Community Law Center and the Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-Sponsor & Support

[AB 539](#) ([Limón](#)) would establish important consumer protections for Californians seeking a loan of more than \$2,500 but less than \$10,000, to contract for or receive charges at a rate not exceeding an annual simple interest rate of 36% plus the Federal Funds Rate.

Location: Introduced

Position: Support

[AB 1048](#) ([Limón](#)) when amended, would enact legislation to strengthen consumer protections by creating a state level consumer financial protection entity charged with improving accountability and transparency in the financial system, providing consumer financial education, and protecting consumers from abusive financial practices.

Location: Introduced

[AB 1310 \(Gomes-Reyes\)](#) would permit persons in traffic court to pay the traffic ticket amount and the cost of traffic school in payment plans.

Location: Introduced

Position: Support

Income Assistance, Work Supports & Child Support

[SB 268 \(Wiener\)](#) would repeal the CalWORKs Asset Test. Co-Sponsored by the Prosperity Now, EARN, California Association of Food Banks, Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations and Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-sponsor & Support

[SB 337 \(Skinner\)](#) would require all child support payments made to be passed through to the child and would allow the Department of Child Support Services to expunge public debt from delinquent payments when this debt is believed to be uncollectable. This bill is co-sponsored by Tipping Point, Insight Center, PolicyLink, Anti-Recidivism Coalition, the Good+ Foundation's Fatherhood Initiative and Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-sponsor & Support

[SB 365 \(Durazno\)](#) would require the county human services agencies to document need for child care at application and certify a family to receive child care services immediately upon determination of eligibility. It would also consider lack of child care in the determination of eligibility for expedited determination of aid. Co-sponsored by the Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations and Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-sponsor & Support

[SB 374 \(Glazer\)](#) would deem CalWORKs students attending publicly funded education entity full-time to be meeting the CalWORKs welfare-to-work requirements and provide students advance payments for books. Sponsored by the Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations.

Location: Introduced

Position: Support

[SB 470 \(Skinner\)](#) would prevent online cash EBT purchases unless retailer has been approved by CDSS and would establish food safety requirements for online CalFresh EBT purchases. This bill is co-sponsored by the Western Center, the California Grocers Association and the United Food and Commercial Workers.

Location: Introduced

Position: Sponsor & Support

[SB 490 \(Hurtado\)](#) prevent low-income people who are disabled or elderly or people who are pregnant or live in a home with children under 5-years of age from being forced to pay back (in cash) CalFresh food aid that was incorrectly awarded to them as a result of a county administrative error. Co-Sponsored by the Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations and Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Location: Introduced

Position: Sponsor & Support

[AB 283 \(K. Chu\)](#) would remove Wilson era economic sanctions to parents in the CalWORKs bill. Co-Sponsored by the Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations and Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Location: Assembly Human Services Committee

Position: Co-Sponsor & Support

[AB 807 \(Bauer-Kahan\)](#) would add to the list of CalWORKs exempt income to include certain scholarships, withdrawal from savings accounts and rental payments received by a government entity. Co-Sponsored by Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations and Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-sponsor & Support

[AB 944 \(Quirk\)](#) would allow counties to extend the 12-month exception period for an indigent exemption in the CalWORKs program as allowed in Section 1631 of Title 8 of the United States Code. Co-sponsored by the Alameda County Social Services Agency and Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-Sponsor & Support

[AB 960 \(Maienschein\)](#) would remove the consecutive day requirement for temporary housing assistance, would direct counties to use the Recipient Financial Eligibility Test, rather than the Minimum Basic Standard of Adequate Care, to determine eligibility for homeless CalWORKs Applicants, allow CalWORKs recipients to use permanent housing assistance payment towards shared housing and would give permission to counties to provide additional nights of temporary assistance if necessary to bridge to the local . Co-sponsored by the Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations and Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-sponsor & Support

[AB 1070 \(Arambula\)](#) would expand access to voluntary home visiting services for pregnant people and parents of young children who are CalWORKs applicants or recipients. It does this by making changes to the CalWORKs Home Visiting Initiative (HVI) established by Assembly Bill 1811 (Chapter 35, Statutes of 2018). Co-Sponsored by Children Now and the Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-Sponsor & Support

[AB 1092 \(Jones-Sawyer\)](#) would prevent the state from charging a higher interest rate for delinquent child support payments than required by federal law and guidance. This bill is co-sponsored by Tipping Point, Insight Center, PolicyLink, Anti-Recidivism Coalition, the Good+ Foundation's Fatherhood Initiative and the Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-Sponsor & Support

[AB 1091 \(Jones-Sawyer\)](#) would improve implementation of the child support payment suspension for people institutionalized for more than 90 days and remove the sunset for the law establishing this policy. This bill is co-sponsored by Tipping Point, Insight Center, PolicyLink, Anti-Recidivism Coalition, the Good+ Foundation's Fatherhood Initiative and the Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-Sponsor & Support

[AB 1403 \(Carrillo\)](#) once amended, would clarify that an adult is only ineligible for General Assistance when they are no longer receiving CalWORKs and when the CalWORKs eligible child is still in the home. Co-Sponsored by Western Center on Law and Poverty and the Coalition on Welfare Rights Organizations.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-Sponsor & Support

[AB 1433 \(Stone\)](#) once amended, would level up the CalWORKs earned income disregard so that it reflects recent changes in minimum wage and keeps pace with increases to the wage. Would make conforming changes to the applicant test. Co-Sponsored by Western Center on Law and Poverty and the County Welfare Directors Association of California.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-sponsor & Support

[AB 1434 \(Kalra\)](#) would increase the SSI / SSP Grants for people who are disabled or elderly so that their income is no less than the federal poverty line. Co-Sponsored by the SSI for California Coalition, Disability Rights California, California Association of Food Banks and Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Location: Introduced

Position: Co-sponsor & Support

About Western Center on Law and Poverty

For over five decades, the Western Center on Law & Poverty has advocated on behalf of individuals with low incomes in every branch of California government—from the courts to the Legislature. Through the lens of economic and racial justice, we litigate, educate and advocate around health care, housing, and public benefits policies and administration.

Learn more at: www.wclp.org For more information about these bills or about our legislative priorities or positions in this issue area, contact:

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