

2019 was a good year for advancing the interests of Californians experiencing poverty. In Sacramento, 16 of our sponsored and co-sponsored bills were signed by the governor, including AB 1482, which established some of the strongest anti-rent gouging and just cause for eviction protections in the country. The legislative wins below are also a part of the firm foundation established by Governor Newsom's first [state budget](#), signed earlier this year.

Together, these victories establish a strong path forward for our work in 2020 and beyond.

FINANCIAL SECURITY

[AB 494 \(Berman\)](#) – CalFresh: Eligibility: Shelter Expense Deductions: Requires the State Department of Social Services to issue guidance to county human services agencies to establish that shelter costs reported by an applicant or recipient on a signed CalFresh application or semiannual report form is sufficient for the purpose of determining the applicant's or recipient's excess shelter costs deduction, and to prohibit county human services agencies from requesting additional documents to verify excess shelter costs, except as specified.

[AB 807 \(Bauer-Kahan\)](#) – CalWORKs Eligibility: Income Exemptions: Adds to the list of CalWORKs exempt income to include certain scholarships, rental payments received by a government entity and income related to the Census. Information available [here](#).

[AB 833 \(Lackey\)](#) – Parking Penalties: Clarifies state law regarding the ability of a local government to place holds on DMV registrations. Current law requires that if a local government chooses to place DMV registration holds to collect unpaid parking tickets, they must offer payment plans to indigent drivers who owe \$300 or less in late parking fines. AB 833 clarifies that in determining eligibility for the \$300 limit, local governments cannot include late fees owed on parking tickets.

[SB 490 \(Hurtado\)](#) – CalFresh: Benefit Overissuance: If a household is no longer receiving CalFresh benefits, current law prohibits the establishment or collection of a CalFresh overissuance caused by administrative error if the overissuance is less than \$125 or the minimum statewide cost-effective threshold established by the state, whichever is greater, and existing law requires collection if the overissuance is caused by inadvertent household error and the overissuance is \$35 or more. This bill increases those threshold overissuance claim amounts to \$400 for a household that is no longer receiving CalFresh benefits. It also requires the State Department of Social Services to develop and implement a policy for compromising administrative error claims, in whole or in part, for households that include at least one elderly or disabled member, as specified.

[SB 616 \(Wieckowski, Hertzberg, L. Rivas\)](#) – Enforcement of Money Judgments: Exemptions: Caps how much can be levied from a bank account at one time to ensure that basic needs of the consumer can be met. Does not relieve the consumer of the debt.

FOOD SECURITY

[AB 942 \(Weber\)](#) – CalFresh: Restaurant Meals Program: Current law requires the State Department of Social Services to issue an annual all-county letter providing guidance that lists which counties or regions are eligible to participate in the RMP and letter providing guidance that lists which counties or regions are eligible to participate in the RMP and the instructions for how a county may choose to participate in RMP or appeal a determination by the department that the county is not eligible. This bill, the Access to Safe Food Choices and Food Security Act of 2019, requires the department, to the extent permitted by federal law and in consultation with various stakeholders, to establish a statewide RMP. It

also requires the department to implement these provisions on or before September 1, 2020, and make other conforming changes.

SB 265 (Hertzberg) – Pupil Meals: Child Hunger Prevention and Fair Treatment Act of 2017: Requires certain local educational agencies, as defined, that provide school meals through the federal National School Lunch Program or the federal School Breakfast Program to ensure that a pupil whose parent or guardian has unpaid school meal fees is not shamed, treated differently, or served a meal that differs from what a pupil whose parent or guardian does not have unpaid school meal fees would receive under that local educational agency’s policy. This bill instead requires those local educational agencies to ensure that a pupil whose parent or guardian has unpaid school meal fees is not denied a reimbursable meal of the pupil’s choice because of the fact that the pupil’s parent or guardian has unpaid meal fees and ensure that the pupil is not shamed or treated differently from other pupils. Western Center’s 2017 report highlighting the issue can be accessed [here](#).

HEALTH CARE

AB 1088 (Wood) – Medi-Cal: Eligibility: Stops beneficiaries from bouncing between free and share-of-cost Medi-Cal by treating Part B premium deductions the same for applicants as for recipients.

SB 260 (Hurtado) – Automatic Health Care Coverage Enrollment: Allows Covered California to automatically enroll people losing Medi-Cal/MCAP/CCHIP and reach out to others losing health coverage.

SB 639 (Mitchell) – Medical Services: Credit or Loan: Prohibits medical providers from signing patients up for medical credit cards with deferred interest provisions along with other consumer protections to ensure Medi-Cal recipients and others aren’t wrongly signed up for medical credit cards.

HOUSING

AB 960 (Maienschein) – CalWORKs: Homeless Assistance: Allows CalWORKs program housing assistance to be used for shared housing.

AB 1482 (Chiu) – Tenant Protection Act of 2019: Tenancy: Rent Caps: Limits annual rent increases to no more than five percent plus inflation and requires just cause to evict tenants for most multifamily properties and some single-family properties that are at least 15 years old and that are not protected by a local rent stabilization policy.

SB 329 (Mitchell) – Discrimination: Housing: Source of Income: The Housing Opportunities Act adds housing assistance as a protected source of income under California’s Fair Employment and Housing Act, which means landlords can no longer refuse applications from families just because they receive housing assistance – giving those families the same chance to apply for housing as others. This policy has been proven to increase access to quality housing and areas of opportunity for families living in poverty.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

SB 36 (Hertzberg) – Pretrial Release: Risk Assessment Tools: Current law, beginning October 1, 2019, and stayed pending voter approval under the powers of referendum pursuant to the California Constitution, requires Pretrial Assessment Services, as defined, to assess a person arrested or detained, as specified, according to a risk assessment

instrument, as defined. Current law requires Pretrial Assessment Services to release from confinement specified individuals based on that risk assessment, and, if the person is not released, to submit that assessment to the court for use in its pretrial release or detention decision. This bill requires each pretrial services agency that uses a pretrial risk assessment tool to validate the tool by January 1, 2021, and on a regular basis thereafter, but no less frequently than once every 3 years, and to make specified information regarding the tool, including validation studies, publicly available.

RACIAL JUSTICE

SB 188 (Mitchell) – Discrimination: Hairstyles: The California Fair Employment and Housing Act prohibits housing discrimination based on specified personal characteristics, including race. The act also prohibits discrimination because of a perception that a person has one of those protected characteristics or is associated with a person who has, or is perceived to have, any of those characteristics. Current law defines terms such as race, religious beliefs, and sex, among others, for purposes of the act. This bill provides that the definition of race for these purposes also include traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles, and defines protective hairstyles for purposes of these provisions.

SB 464 (Mitchell) – California Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act: Requires implicit bias training for all perinatal providers and improved data collection in order to reduce the maternal mortality disparity between black women and other women in California. Also requires hospitals to inform patients how to file discrimination complaints with the appropriate state agency.