



Los Angeles Office
205 S. Broadway, Suite 205
Los Angeles, CA 90012

March 9, 2017

Assemblymember Blanca Rubio, Chair
Human Services Committee, California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 5175
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Assembly Bill 563 (Arambula) – SUPPORT

Dear Chairperson Rubio,

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) is writing in support of AB 563 (Arambula), which will support CalFresh recipients in securing employment and earnings that are enough for them to exit poverty. It will do this by: (1) Removing the double penalty of unemployment for recipients subject to the Able Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) time limit; (2) Establishing a CalFresh E&T Center for Excellence; and, (3) Clarifying that the Department of Social Services may directly contract with CalFresh E&T Providers.

Two million new jobs have been created and unemployment has decreased by half since 2011. Still, many Californians struggle with unemployment, underemployment and low-wages and, as a result, experience hunger or are forced to rely on programs in the social public safety net. In fact, in 2015, nearly 80% of poor Californians had earnings from work.

Without support to improve their skills and education, these Californians will linger in poverty regardless of how hard they work.

Changes to the CalFresh Employment and Training Program (CalFresh E&T) made in 2013 (SB 1321, Chaptered laws of 2012), led County Human Services Agencies to improve their CalFresh E&T Programs and, today, over 30 Counties are participating in the program. Buoyed by recent federal funding supporting programs such as those offered by the Fresno Bridge Academy, CalFresh E&T Programs are finding success in helping families secure employment that allows them to achieve self-sufficiency. Still, current state law does not provide for seamless access to CalFresh E&T for low-income Californians eligible for the program.

AB 563 will bring more employment training and work opportunities to low-income Californians by clarifying the rules and supporting development and distribution of E&T best practices. For these reasons, CFPA supports AB 563 and urges your 'aye' vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jared Call".

Jared Call, Managing Nutrition Policy Advocate

cc: The Honorable Joaquin Arambula, California State Assembly (Author)
Members of the Assembly Human Services Committee
Jessica Bartholow, Western Center on Law & Poverty (Sponsor)

CFPA is a statewide policy and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the health and well being of low income Californians by increasing their access to nutritious, affordable food.