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March 13, 2014

Honourable Mark Stone
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for AB 1579

Dear Assembly Member Stone,

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) is writing in support of AB 1579 which would change the state's California Work Opportunities and Responsibility to Kids (CaWORKs) program statute to allow pregnant women, with no other children in the household, to become eligible for CaWORKs basic needs grants and Medi-Cal benefits upon verification of pregnancy.

CFPA is a statewide public policy and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of low-income Californians by increasing their access to nutritious, affordable food. One of CFPA's goals is to ensure that eligible California families have access to and participate in the federal nutrition programs, including CalFresh. By default, California families who receive CaWORKs also receive CalFresh nutrition assistance. Together CaWORKs and CalFresh benefits ensure that families have the resources necessary to access nutritious food and thrive in good health.

Current CaWORKs policy requires women to wait until the third trimester to be eligible for grants through CaWORKs. This policy not only impacts eligibility for basic cash assistance for very low-income pregnant women. It can also result in a lack of continuous healthcare coverage. By insuring uninterrupted supportive services, including basic cash assistance, nutrition assistance and healthcare, low-income California women are more likely to experience a healthy pregnancy.

For these reasons, CFPA supports AB 1579 and thanks you for introducing this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alexis Fernandez", written over a horizontal line.

Alexis Fernandez
Director of Legislation
California Food Policy Advocates