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March 10, 2014

Mark Stone, Chairman
Human Services Committee, California State Assembly
State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Assembly Bill 1776 (Nazarian) -SUPPORT

Dear Honorable Stone,

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) supports AB 1776, which would make the California state hearing process for CalWORKs and CalFresh more efficient without impeding the due process rights of beneficiaries.

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. We work to fulfill our mission by advocating for improvements, including increased program efficiency, to the federal nutrition programs, such as CalFresh.

AB 1776 would:

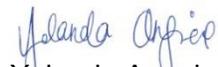
1. Authorize the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and counties to transmit documents and accept hearing information from claimants electronically to the extent that the county and CDSS have the capacity to do so and if agreed to by the claimant.
2. State that when a county enters into a conditional withdrawal on an issue related to a CalWORKs or CalFresh benefits matter the conditional withdrawal shall be permanent and the county will be barred from issuing another notice of action on the same matter during the same period.
3. State that when a county enters into a conditional withdrawal any pending aid shall continue until a county has issued a notice complying with any conditional withdrawal.

Currently, counties have the option to reissue a notice of action even when a county and claimant had previously agreed to rescind that same notice of action in order to resolve an administrative hearing. The notice of action may be reissued after several months or even several years from the original agreement. Under these circumstances, it is possible that the claimant is not able to present an adequate defense, for example, because the claimant's witnesses have moved. Additionally, it is often the case that a new hearing request results in the same outcome: a conditional withdrawal. This process can be inefficient and unjustifiably burdensome on the claimant. AB 1776 would reduce the number of unnecessary adjudications of state hearings; reducing burden on claimants and eliminating unnecessary hearings at a cost savings of about \$3,000 per hearing.

Furthermore, some counties do not continue pending aid once a conditional withdrawal has been established. This can result in additional and unnecessary hearings because claimants do not want to have their pending aid stopped. This bill would allow pending aid to continue in an effort to encourage more conditional withdrawals, rather than additional hearings.

AB 1776 enhances the state hearing process and improves efficiency without impeding the due process right of public social services program beneficiaries. For these reasons CFPA supports AB 1776 and asks for your "aye" vote.

Sincerely,



Yolanda Anguiano
Nutritional Policy Advocate

cc: Myesha Jackson, Chief Consultant, Assembly Human Services Committee,
Elissa Ouchida, Office of Assemblymember Adrian Nazarian,
Kevin Aslanian, CCWRO Sponsor of AB 1776,
Members of the Committee