

March 14, 2014

The Honorable Mark Stone
Chair, Assembly Human Services Committee
State Capitol, Room 124
Sacramento, CA 94249



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Re: Support for AB 1454 (Calderon)

Dear Chairperson Stone:

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) is writing in support of AB 1454, a bill that would require community care facilities to be subject to annual unannounced visits by the Department of Social Services, instead of the current interval of every five years.

CFPA is a statewide non-profit 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 main areas of focus is ensuring child care settings provide an environment where healthy foods and beverages are offered.

In 2010, CFPA sponsored AB 2084, the Healthy Beverages Law, which requires child care providers to serve only healthy beverages to the children in their care. To better understand the impact of the Healthy Beverages Law, CFPA conducted a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation-funded study in partnership with UC Berkeley's Atkins Center for Weight and Health and Samuels & Associates. A key finding was a meager 50 percent compliance rate with the Healthy Beverages Law. A variety of recommendations were identified to shrink this compliance gap, including increased regularity of state monitoring.

Monitoring of licensed child care facilities is an essential function of the state department; ensuring the basic health and safety needs of children in care are met. Unfortunately, budget cuts over the past several years and compliance procedures have resulted in a process that provides inadequate oversight and monitoring of child care facilities. In fact, Child Care Aware, a national early care and education organization, ranked California in last place for meeting basic standards of child care oversight and regulation.

For these reasons and more, CFPA supports AB 1454 and urges your "aye" vote on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elyse Homel Vitale".

Elyse Homel Vitale, MPH
Nutrition Policy Advocate
California Food Policy Advocates

cc: Assemblymember Ian Calderon