2017 Legislative Agenda

CA Assembly Bills

AB 164 (Arambula) would establish a new chapter in Welfare and Institutions code which would provide for a state funded anti-hunger CalFresh benefit to be issued under prescribed circumstances, such as drought, disaster or in the case of federal SNAP ineligibility, and to be issued using the EBT system.

AB 796 (Kalra) would reinstate the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for the SSI/SSP program so that recipients never receive a payment that is below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level.

AB 167 (Lackey) would require the Department and County Human Services Agencies to use a blank semiannual report form as the certificate of eligibility for the purposes of CalWORKs and CalFresh.

AB 214 (Weber) would address college student hunger by defining terms used in the CalFresh program to determine eligibility and clarifying law concerning the CalFresh Restaurant Meal Program on College Campuses.

AB 607 (Gloria) would allow California to declare a state of emergency for the purposes of making disaster CalFresh and CalWORKS available to people affected by a natural disaster. Currently, the Federal government has to declare the state of emergency.

CA Senate Bills

SB 61 (Hertzberg) would renew and extend the Emergency Food for Families Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund, which allows California taxpayers to contribute amounts in excess of their personal income tax liability. Funds will be driven to the CalFood program (formerly SEFAP).

SB 138 (McGuire) would require the state and all school districts to utilize Medi-Cal Direct Certification to enroll students in the federal school meal programs, and for the highest-poverty schools to offer free breakfasts and lunches to all students through a federal universal meal provision.

SB 708 (Skinner) would improve access for people leaving prison to CalFresh and to Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

SB 282 (Wiener) would codify the CalFresh Restaurant Meal Program (RMP). The Reducing Hunger Among Vulnerable Californians Act of 2017 would require CDSS to issue an annual all-county letter providing guidance that lists which counties or regions are eligible to participate in the Restaurant Meals Program.

SB 278 (Wiener) would require the California Department of Social Services to establish a minimum cost-effective threshold for collecting CalFresh overissuances. This would allow the state to set a higher threshold than the federal threshold of $125.

SB 250 (Hertzberg) would ensure that school officials do not delay/deny food to punish students and would require districts to publish their policies for notifying and collecting debts from parents who have not paid school meal fees.

CA Budget Items

CalFood: Invest $17.5 million in CalFood (formerly the State Emergency Food Assistance Program), which supports both people and farmers by enabling food banks to purchase California-grown products for distribution to Californians in need of food.

SSI/SSP: Raise supplemental security income (SSI) above the poverty level and restore the state COLA permanently. Implement the Housing & Disability Advocacy Program in the 2016-17 budget year.

Federal Bills

H.R. 1276 (Adams; NC) would increase minimum SNAP (CalFresh) benefits for households by using USDA's 'low-cost food plan' instead of the 'thrifty food plan.'

H.R. 6305 (Davis; CA) would exclude the value of a housing allowance for a member of a uniformed service from any income, assets, or resources calculation for determining eligibility for SNAP (CalFresh).

H.R. 952 (Fudge; OH) would clarify and enhance coverage under The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act (Emerson Act) which promotes food donation by protecting food donors and food recovery organizations like food banks.

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