



March 5, 2018

The Honorable Patrick O'Donnell
Chair, Assembly Committee on Education
State Capitol, Room 2196
Sacramento, CA 94249-0070

Re: Co-Sponsor support for AB 1871 (Bonta)– Don't Make Hunger a School Choice

Dear Assemblymember O'Donnell,

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA), California Teachers Association (CTA), California State Parent Teacher Association (CA-PTA), and Western Center on Law and Poverty (WCLP) are proud to co-sponsor AB 1871, legislation that will fight hunger, advance equity, and support student success by making school meals available to more public school students.

Across California, charter schools enroll one in every 10 public school students, including more than 340,000 students whose families are struggling to make ends meet. Low-income charter school students are the only low-income public school students not protected under the existing state law that makes school meals available to students in need.

AB 1871 would guarantee that all low-income public school students, including charter school students, have access to at least one nutritious, free or reduced-price school meal each school day.

We support AB 1871 because

- **We believe in food and fairness for all children.** All students deserve equitable access to the basic resources that support their success, including school meals. To close the achievement gap for low-income students and students of color, we must guarantee equity of opportunity and resources;

- **Hungry students struggle to learn.** Research and common sense tell us that children must be well nourished in order to learn, grow, and achieve at their fullest potential. No student should go hungry in a California public school;
- **This change is feasible and categorically funded.** Like all public schools, charter schools are entitled to state and federal funds to operate school meal programs. From self-prep in an on-site or central kitchen to contracting with a school district or vendor, there are many options for operating and administering school meal programs; and
- **California should not make hunger a school choice.** Charter schools are meant to expand choice in public education and, by law, are open to all students, including low income students. School meals are a critical resource for all students in need, no matter which public school they attend.

We respectfully request your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Tracey Patterson
Director of Legislation
California Food Policy Advocates



Seth Bramble
Legislative Advocate
California Teacher Association



Jessica Bartholow
Legislative Advocate
Western Center on Law and Poverty



Carol Kocivar
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cc: Assemblymember Rob Bonta (author)