

Dr. LaShae Sharp- Collins

79th Assembly District



AB 1211: CalFresh Eligibility

SUMMARY

AB 1211 protects CalFresh benefits against cuts from the federal administration and requires the California Department of Social Services to conduct a feasibility study on both increasing benefits and expanding program eligibility.

BACKGROUND

CalFresh is California's largest federal food assistance program serving over 5.2 million residents, the majority of whom are children, seniors, and people with disabilities. The average daily benefit per person is \$6- an amount that is integral to the recipients as food costs continue to rise.

CalFresh is primarily federally funded and uncertainty at the federal level threatens the program's long-term stability; putting millions of Californians at risk of food insecurity. CalFresh is a foundational program that combats food insecurity. Any sudden reduction of federal funding will be catastrophic to the families that rely on CalFresh.

By proactively protecting the amount of CalFresh assistance families receive, AB 1211 creates a more inclusive and effective food assistance system that supports the well-being of all Californians and ensures no step backward fighting poverty-related hunger.

Every \$1 in food assistance generates as much as \$1.80 into the economy as benefits are spent. Every \$1 billion in benefits creates some 15,000 jobs.

The bill also mandates a feasibility study to explore pathways for expanding eligibility and benefits, with a particular focus on addressing disparities in access. Expansion of this program benefits all Californians in the long-term.

THIS BILL

To ensure food security, AB 1211 safeguards CalFresh benefits by requiring the State to maintain current funding levels in spite of federal cuts. It also requires the Department of Social Services to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of increasing the eligibility and benefit levels of this program.

SUPPORT

SEIU
End Poverty in CA (EPIC)
Coalition of CA Welfare Rights Organizations
Western Center on Law & Poverty

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