[Supporting California State Senate Bill No. 107 (Wiener) - CalFresh]

Resolution supporting California State Senate Bill No. 107, authored by Senator Scott Wiener and co-authored by Senator Bill Dodd, on CalFresh to reduce the prevalence of food insecurity and poverty among older adults and people with disabilities.

WHEREAS, COVID-19 pandemic conditions are increasing the already high number of San Francisco residents experiencing food insecurity and despite federal and state interventions, the most recent data show that overall food insecurity has spiked to more than 25 percent of California households, 10 million people, and 2.5 times higher than before the COVID-19 crisis began; and

WHEREAS, This troubling trend has more acute consequences during the crisis, as food insecurity compounds poor health and economic conditions by placing low-income older adults and people with disabilities at increased risk for serious harm; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly increased food insecurity among low-income Californians, and disproportionately impacted Black and Latinx individuals; and

WHEREAS, Inadequate nutrition and food insecurity threatens the health of 3.7 million low-income adults and over 2 million children in California, leading to adverse health outcomes among children, and increased risk of chronic disease, including diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, yet nearly 1.7 million eligible Californians are not receiving CalFresh nutrition benefits; and

WHEREAS, The average CalFresh benefit in California is $136 per person per month; if the state enrolled the 2 million eligible, but not participating, Californians into CalFresh, it would draw up to $2.1 billion in federal food benefits to the state annually, which would also significantly help farmers, grocers, and the local economy; and
WHEREAS, While working poor Californians struggle with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 crisis and struggle to meet their basic needs like food and housing, California ranks fourth to last in the nation at connecting working poor households to the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known in California as CalFresh; and

WHEREAS, California’s seniors are enduring the most severe health consequences of the pandemic, including experiencing hunger and poverty; yet, California ranks last in the nation at connecting seniors to SNAP, known in California as CalFresh, despite recent policy changes to simplify enrollment processes and medical deductions for seniors; and

WHEREAS, The need to streamline CalFresh application processes is more urgent than ever as the number of new CalFresh applications surges due to the economic downturn and spiking unemployment and with state, county, and outreach partner capacity stretched to the limit, operational efficiency is the top priority; and

WHEREAS, Expanded federal authority during the crisis has allowed California to implement several key changes to ease program access during the pandemic and through State Legislative action, temporary improvements to CalFresh program access, and boosting the program’s health and economic stimulus impact can be extended; and

WHEREAS, CalFresh has a critical dual role to play in California’s immediate and long-term COVID-19 response as a proven positive public health intervention and powerful economic stabilizer and according to the most recent data, only 19 percent of eligible older Californians (age 60 or over) receive CalFresh, the lowest participation rate of any state; and

WHEREAS, The CalFresh Program is the first line of defense against food insecurity in the City and County of San Francisco by providing vital nutrition benefits for eligible low-income households to purchase nutritious foods at authorized retailers including supermarkets, neighborhood grocery stores, and farmers’ markets; and
WHEREAS, Community-based food programs alone cannot eliminate persistent
hunger due to limited capacity compared to existing need and nationwide, federal nutrition
programs provide 19 of every 20 meals needed by low-income people; and

WHEREAS, The most recent USDA analysis available estimated California’s CalFresh
participation rate at 71 percent, ranking 45th out of 50 states, and well below the national
average of 84 percent; and

WHEREAS, Program data from San Francisco’s Department of Aging and Adult
Services indicate that 78 percent of adults with disabilities seeking home delivered and
congregate meal services are food insecure; and

WHEREAS, The most recent analysis from the California Department of Social
Services indicates San Francisco County ranks in the bottom third of California’s 58 counties,
with a CalFresh participation rate of 56 percent, compared to the statewide rate of 71 percent;
and

WHEREAS, Recent studies show that access to SNAP significantly improved low-income seniors’ chances of living independently in the community and avoiding
hospitalization, including reduced likelihood of subsequent nursing home use and reduced
Medicare and Medicaid costs; and

WHEREAS, The estimated additional federally-funded benefits received if participation
reached 100 percent of income eligible individuals in San Francisco County is $83.5 million;
and

WHEREAS, The estimated annual increase in economic activity if CalFresh reached
100 percent of eligible households in San Francisco County is $128.7 million; and

WHEREAS, A 2010 study by the USDA found that for every $1 billion of added SNAP
funding, between 8,900 and 17,000 jobs were created and CalFresh stimulates local
economic activity and creates jobs in the food agricultural, retail, and distribution sectors; and
WHEREAS, The San Francisco Board of Supervisors have acknowledged that "food is a basic human right and essential for human health" and thus created the Food Security Task Force in 2013 (Resolution 447-13) with the goal of ending hunger by 2020; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors hereby supports California State Senate Bill No. 107, CalFresh, which if enacted would simplify the CalFresh application for older adults and people with disabilities and ensure all applicants and participants can complete the application and recertification interview processes by phone, including the required client signature; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors hereby directs the Clerk of the Board to transmit a copy of this Resolution to the California State Assembly and the California State Senate as well as the Bill’s primary sponsor, State Senator Scott Wiener.
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February 23, 2021 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED

Ayes: 11 - Chan, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Melgar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani and Walton

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 2/23/2021 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution, not being signed by the Mayor within the time limit as set forth in Section 3.103 of the Charter, or time waived pursuant to Board Rule 2.14.2, became effective without her approval in accordance with the provision of said Section 3.103 of the Charter or Board Rule 2.14.2.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board