Resolution supporting California State Senate Bill No. 882, authored by State Senator Scott Wiener, to reduce the prevalence of food insecurity and poverty among older adults and people with disabilities in the City and County of San Francisco by increasing participation in the CalFresh Program.

WHEREAS, COVID-19 pandemic conditions are increasing the already high number of San Francisco residents experiencing food insecurity; this troubling trend has more acute consequences during the crisis, as food insecurity compounds poor health and economic conditions — placing low-income older adults and people with disabilities at increased risk for serious harm; 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; 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; with state legislative action, we can extend certain temporary improvements to CalFresh program access, boosting the program's health and economic stimulus impact; 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; yet, 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 San Francisco County by providing supplemental 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; 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 72 percent, ranking 47th out of 50 states, and well below the national average of 85 percent; and

WHEREAS, The most recent analysis available from the national Food Research and Action Center estimated California’s CalFresh participation rate among older adults age 60 or over at 19 percent, ranking last out of all states, and well below the national average of 42 percent; and

WHEREAS, Program data from San Francisco’s Department of Aging and Adult Services indicates 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 eight counties at or above the national average of 85 percent; and

WHEREAS, 73 percent of CalFresh participants are families with children and nearly 46 percent are working families; and
WHEREAS, Studies show that adults who received CalFresh as a child have higher high school completion rates and lower rates of stunted growth, obesity and heart disease than non-CalFresh counterparts; 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 $42.7 million; and

WHEREAS, The estimated annual increase in economic activity if CalFresh reached 100 percent of eligible households in San Francisco County is $76.3 million; and

WHEREAS, CalFresh stimulates local economic activity and creates jobs in the food agricultural, retail, and distribution sectors; 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

WHEREAS, The County of San Francisco’s 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 No. 447-13) with the goal of ending hunger by 2020; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco supports State Senate Bill No. 882 (Wiener) as written, which would, if enacted: simplify the CalFresh application for many older adults and people with disabilities; eliminate burdensome reporting requirements that cause many households to lose food assistance, despite remaining eligible; and ensure all applicants and participants can complete the application and recertification interview processes by phone, including the required client signature.
Resolution supporting California State Senate Bill No. 882, authored by State Senator Scott Wiener, to reduce the prevalence of food insecurity and poverty among older adults and people with disabilities in the City and County of San Francisco by increasing participation in the CalFresh Program.

June 02, 2020 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED
Ayes: 11 - Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton and Yee

File No. 200525

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 6/2/2020 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