



The Honorable Eloise Gómez Reyes, Chair
Assembly Human Services Committee
1020 N Street, Room 2175
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1022 (Wicks) – Prevent the harm of federal time limits on CalFresh nutrition assistance
- SUPPORT

Dear Chair Reyes:

On behalf of Indivisible East Bay, we write to express our strong support for Assembly Bill 1022 (Wicks), which will protect unemployed and underemployed adults from losing their nutrition assistance through the establishment of the California Anti-Hunger Response and Employment Training (CARET) program.

Hunger never makes it easier to prepare for work, find employment, or succeed at a job. The CARET program will fight hunger and support work by providing state-funded nutrition benefits to individuals who have been determined ineligible for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as a result of inflexible and ineffective three-month time limits imposed by the federal government.

SNAP (CalFresh) recipients ages 18 to 49 without dependent children who are considered fit to work are categorized as Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs.) Someone with ABAWD status is generally time-limited to just three months of CalFresh within a three-year period unless they are working over 20 hours each week or living in a county that has had the work requirements waived due to relatively high unemployment.

As the economy improves in aggregate, California counties have begun to lose their ABAWD waivers. By the end of 2019, an estimated 40,000 Californians will be subject to these time limits. To make matters worse, the federal government has introduced a proposed administrative change that could cause nearly every county in the state to lose its ABAWD waiver. If this new rule is enacted, it could expose up to 570,000 Californians to harsh time limits that increase hunger, not employment.

Individuals struggling to find work need support and assistance, not an empty stomach. The USDA reports that individuals likely to be cut off by the three-month limit have average

monthly incomes of approximately 17% of the federal poverty level and typically qualify for no other income support. The reality of low-wage employment is that individuals often face volatile job schedules and insufficient work hours, even if they are willing to work more.

For these reasons and more, Indivisible East Bay opposes time-limited food assistance and supports the establishment of the CARET program to prevent hunger. We urge you to vote aye on AB 1022 (Wicks). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,