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07 July 2010

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>>

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Please Send Letters of Support ASAP AB 1876 (Torlakson) Heads to the Governor's Desk for Consideration

Assembly Bill 1876 (Torlakson), a bill that would allow ASES programs to use their base grants to provide weekend activities, as well as give competitive priority to successful K-8 21st CCLC programs that re-apply for federal funding, has passed both houses of the Legislature and is on its way to the Governor for consideration.

Please send a letter to the Governor in support of AB 1876 as soon as possible. You can use the following template:

- [AB 1876 Letter of Support template](#) | [Download >>](#)

Please fax your support letter ASAP: **916.445.4633**

More about AB 1876

AB 1876, sponsored by the **Partnership for Children and Youth** and authored by **Assemblymember Tom Torlakson**, would accomplish two important things for state and federally funded after-school programs:

- Clarify that grants for After School Education and Safety (ASES) programs and 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) may be used for weekend activities for students. Weekend activities or field trips have been important incentives in some programs to enhance

student participation, but in recent years, the state has disallowed grant funding to be used for this purpose.

- Give expiring 21st CCLC grantees who have performed well over their five-year grant period, extra points when they are re-applying for new 21st CCLC grants. Federal law prohibits straight “renewal” of 21st CCLC grants, so this is a way to help strong 21st CCLC grantees continue their programs and services for students.

Read an [analysis of AB 1876 >>](#)

Summer Food Update

California Children Missing Out on Meals During Summer Months

New Report Shows Drastic Fall in Participation in the Summer Nutrition Programs

Almost 80,000 fewer California children took part in the Summer Nutrition Programs in July 2009 compared to July 2008, according to a new report, **Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation**, by the [Food Research and Action Center](#) (FRAC). This represents a 13% decline in participation at a time when participation in other federal safety-net programs is on the rise. Nationally, the participation rate fell by 2.5 percent.

- Report: Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation
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Leaders of the [California Association of Food Banks](#) and the [California Food Policy Advocates](#) said the significant drop-off in summer meal program participation means many low-income children in the state were going without enough nutritious food. They attributed much of the drop-off to cutbacks in state funding for programs -- like summer schools -- that also provide meals.

The two organizations held a conference call June 29 to draw attention to the report's findings and discuss ways to increase participation. Kate Karpilow, executive director of the [California Center for Research on Women and Families](#), which is working with the statewide [Summer Meal Program Coalition](#) to increase the number of summer meal sponsors and sites, and Jim Weill, president of FRAC, also took part in the call.

The Summer Nutrition Programs, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provide meals to children who rely on free and reduced-price school meals during the school year. Summer meals are offered at participating sites, such as public and private schools, city- or county-run children's summer programs or nonprofit programs, with federal funding provided to offset the costs.

While participation in summer meal programs fell, participation in the National School Lunch Program rose from the 2007-2008 school year to the 2008-2009 school year, confirming the rising need for nutrition assistance among low-income families. More than 2.14 million California children relied on the School Lunch Program in 2007-2008; this number jumped to 2.26 million in the 2008-2009 school year. By comparison, only 509,710 California children took part in the Summer Nutrition Programs in July 2009 compared to 588,175 in July 2008. That means the Summer Nutrition Programs reached only 23 percent of low-income children who ate school lunch during the regular school year.

"It's especially troubling to see such a large gap between the number of children who use the School Lunch Program versus those who use the Summer Nutrition Program," said Sue Sigler, executive director of the California Association of Food Banks. "As a state, we have to be concerned about where these thousands and thousands of children are getting their food during the summer. The truth is, in most cases they are having to go without."

If the Summer Nutrition Programs in California were to serve just 40 out of every 100 children who participate in the School Lunch Program during the year, the state would receive an additional \$27,055,081 in federal nutrition funding -- and help an additional 392,900 low-income children.

California Food Policy Advocates also recently released an analysis of trends in summer nutrition in California, *School's Out Who Ate? 2010*, providing insight into the decline, county-by-county participation details and state and local policy developments, such as the collapse of summer school, that have jeopardized children's nutritional needs.

"The majority of summer feeding sites in California are held at summer school or other state-run summer enrichment programs, but the state's budget cuts into these programs severely limited the feeding sites available last year," said Matt Sharp, senior advocate with the California Food Policy Advocates. "In today's economy, families need assistance

more than ever, but by cutting back on summer activities, we're not only shortchanging their educational opportunities, but also reducing where kids can access nutritious meals during the summer months."

The California Association of Food Banks and the California Food Policy Advocates join FRAC in calling on Congress to expand the reach of the Summer Nutrition Programs by:

- Improving the program's too-narrow area eligibility test so that children from low-income families in a broader range of poor communities are able to participate;
 - Expanding to all states a Year-Round Summer Food Pilot, currently only in effect in California, which reduces paperwork and eases administrative requirements for community-based sponsors that serve children during both the summer and after school during the school year;
 - Providing grants to sponsors for start-up and expansion costs and transportation of children in order to bring new sponsors into the program and allow existing sponsors to serve more children; and
 - Increasing reimbursement rates so that schools, local government agencies, and private nonprofit organizations are able to operate the program without losing money and can provide healthier food.
- "Increased funding for child nutrition programs would ensure that more low-income children have access to summer meals that stave off hunger, help reduce obesity, and draw children into educational and enrichment programs that keep them learning throughout the summer," Weill said. "Congress must make these programs stronger so we can take a decisive step forward in meeting President Barack Obama's goal of ending childhood hunger by 2015."

Source: California Association of Food Banks and California Food Policy Advocates

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