



County of Santa Cruz

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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AGENDA: 6/18/02

June 6, 2002

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ASSEMBLY BILL 2415

Dear Members of the Board:

Attached is a letter from Willy Elliott-McCrea, Executive Director of the Second Harvest Food Bank, urging that our Board take a position in support of Assembly Bill 2415, originally introduced by Speaker pro Tem Fred Keeley. While existing law provides that Food Stamp and CalWORKS recipients must complete a detailed report every month or their benefits will be discontinued, AB 2415 will replace this burdensome process with a quarterly reporting system. According to Speaker pro Tem Keeley, this will result in administrative relief for local caseworkers currently overburdened with paperwork, would simplify the application process for eligible persons, and reduce reporting errors and consequent penalties. In addition, AB 2415 would streamline eligibility requirements between Medical and Food Stamps by eliminating duplicative qualifications and procedures.

As Board members will recall, our 2002 County Legislative Program includes the following:

"The Food Stamp application and eligibility process should be simplified and the Administrative complexities of the Food Stamp Program should be reduced. Currently the complexities of applying for and maintaining eligibility for the program are a barrier to many eligible people. A process that more closely aligns the Food Stamp application process with that of other public assistance programs would provide increased access to this food security benefit."

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
June 6, 2002
Page 2

The Food Stamp and CalWORKS Programs are important benefits for those in need and the provisions of Assembly Bill 2415 would enhance accessibility to these programs. Accordingly, I recommend that the Board of Supervisors take the following actions:

1. Adopt the attached resolution supporting the passage of Assembly Bill 2415.
2. Direct the Clerk of the Board to distribute the resolution as indicated.
3. Direct the County Administrative Officer to place the Bill in our legislative tracking system.

Sincerely,



JANET K. BEAUTZ, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors

KB:ted
Attachments

cc: Speaker pro Tem Fred Keeley
Willy Elliott-McCrea, Second Harvest Food Bank
Human Resources Agency Administrator

3118A6

BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

RESOLUTION NO.

On the motion of Supervisor
duly seconded by Supervisor
the following resolution is adopted

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ASSEMBLY BILL **2415**

WHEREAS, Assembly Bill **2415** was introduced into the California State Assembly by Speaker pro Tem Fred Keeley on February **21, 2002**; and

WHEREAS, existing law provides that Food Stamp and CalWORKS recipients must complete a detailed report every month or their benefits will be discontinued; and

WHEREAS, Assembly Bill **2415** will replace this burdensome process with a quarterly reporting system, resulting in administrative relief for local caseworkers currently overburdened with paperwork, simplification of the application process for eligible persons, and a reduction in reporting errors and consequent penalties; and

WHEREAS, Assembly Bill **2415** would streamline eligibility requirements between Medical and Food Stamps by eliminating duplicative qualifications and procedures; and

WHEREAS, the Food Stamp and CalWORKS Programs are important benefits for those in need and the provisions of Assembly Bill **2415** would enhance accessibility to these programs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors hereby supports the passage of Assembly Bill **2415**.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz, State of California, this _____ day of _____, **2002**, by the following vote:

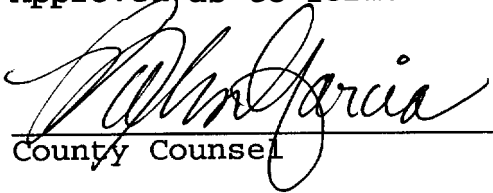
AYES: SUPERVISORS
NOES: SUPERVISORS
ABSENT: SUPERVISORS

JANET K. BEAUTZ, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors

ATTEST: _____
Clerk of said Board

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ASSEMBLY BILL 2415
Page 2

Approved as to form:



County Counsel

DISTRIBUTION: Speaker pro Tem Fred Keeley
Assembly Member Simón Salinas
Senator Bruce McPherson
Governor Wilson
California State Association of Counties
Human Resources Agency Administrator
County Counsel
Second Harvest Food Bank

3118A6



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Executive Director
Willy Elliott-McCrea

May 29, 2002

Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean St.
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: Support for AB 2415 (Keeley)

The Second Harvest Food Bank is requesting a Board resolution supporting **AB 2415**, a bill **drafted** by Speaker pro tem Fred Keeley to improve the food stamp program in California by:

- Moving from monthly to quarterly reporting for recipients
- Creating a categorical eligibility linking Medical and food stamps

Since the Board's resolution supporting **S. 583** last year (improvements to **food** stamps including restoration of immigrant benefits), Congress has **indeed** moved forward on streamlining food stamps in the recently passed **Farm Bill**. Simplifying the program, increasing benefits, and restoring immigrant eligibility has been a good first step in reinforcing the food stamp **program** in its role as **our** nation's first line of defense against hunger.

Now it is the State of California's *turn* to step up to the plate and improve this important nutritional program for low-income families and individuals, both working and unemployed. Fred Keeley's bill will eliminate paperwork, reduce the state's **error** rate (savings millions of dollars in penalties), and increase participation, without "busting the budget". Administrative savings moving from monthly to quarterly reporting will **pay** for connecting Medical recipients with food stamp benefits, creating a virtually cost neutral bill.

As food banks and pantries on the Central Coast struggle to keep up with dramatic increases in the demand for **food**, we face local and state generated budget cuts, which will make **our** job even more difficult. **If** the state can do its part and strengthen the food stamp program, we can continue do our job effectively **as** an emergency food assistance network.

Thanks for your time and consideration in this matter and your ongoing commitment to ending hunger in Santa Cruz County.

Yours Sincerely,

Willy Elliott-McCrea
Executive Director

► **AB 2415: Red Tape Reduction Act for Hungry, Working Californians**

0238

Contact: Autumn Arnold at 415.777.4422, ext. 107 or autumnn@cfpa.net

► **Issue**

The Food Stamp Program is a targeted and effective means of fighting hunger in California, but red tape and bureaucracy prevent far too many families from receiving benefits. Two years ago, the California legislature took an important first step to reduce paperwork by simplifying and shortening the food stamp application. But working families who are struggling to put food on the table still have a hard time completing the burdensome paperwork required to get and keep benefits. A more efficient food stamp system is long overdue; the existing food stamp bureaucracy not only hinders food stamp participation; it also wastes millions of dollars every year.

AB 2415 will remove two major barriers to help more hungry people get food stamps. Currently, food stamp recipients must complete a detailed report every month or their benefits will be discontinued. AB 2415 will replace this burdensome system with a quarterly reporting system for food stamps and CalWORKs. It will also create an eligibility **link** between Me&Cal and the Food Stamp Program that eliminates many of the duplicative and inconsistent rules between these two important health programs.

► **Need**

Research shows that food stamp benefits help prevent hunger and its devastating physical consequences for millions of low-income adults and children in California. Food stamps give children the nutrition they need to learn in school and prepare for successful adulthood. They support greater stability among low-income families who are struggling to make ends meet, and they ease many families' transition from welfare to work. Yet less than 50 percent of all eligible Californians get food stamp benefits; to many people, the constant stream of paperwork and verification is more hassle than the modest food stamp benefits are worth.

In order to reach its full potential as a health and work support for low-income Californians, the Food Stamp Program must change to reflect their changing needs. Over 70 percent of food stamp recipients and eligible non-recipients are working and juggling busy schedules, yet they still need the nutritional support the Food Stamp Program provides. The same excessive, often duplicative paperwork that buries food stamp recipients costs the state millions of dollars each year. And, errors caused by monthly reporting and eligibility determination have made California liable for over \$100 million in federal fines this year.

► **Request**

Will result in savings

Red Tape Reduction Act for Hungry, Working Californians

Requires that California replace its monthly reporting system for food stamps and CalWORKs with a quarterly reporting requirement. Establishes an eligibility link between Food Stamps and Medi-Cal to reduce cross-program duplication.

► **History**

Under federal law, California has many opportunities to eliminate red tape for food stamp recipients. Although USDA allows states wide flexibility in moving from the antiquated monthly reporting system, California is one of just eight states that still require monthly reporting for all food stamp participants. In 1999, the Legislature passed AB 510, which allowed a limited number of counties to move away from monthly reporting for food stamps and CalWORKs. Because the legislative alternative was more complicated than monthly reporting, no counties opted to make this change. In contrast, AB 2415 would create a simple quarterly reporting system for food stamps and CalWORKs recipients. Under the 1999 Clinton Food Stamp Initiative, states also have an opportunity to create eligibility links between Food Stamps and health or work-support programs like Me&Cal.

► **Outcomes**

AB 2415 will cut through red tape to help more working Californians get food stamp assistance—and it will help the state save money on food stamp administration and federal fines for food stamp errors. As a result of this legislation, more people will have the food they need to stay healthy, learn in school and succeed in the workplace.

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 30, 2002

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL, 1, 2002

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2001-02 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2415

Introduced by Assembly Member ~~Keeley~~ *Members Keeley and Longville*

(Coauthors: Assembly Members ~~Chen~~ *Chen, Salinas, Steinberg, and Wiggins*)

(Coauthors: Senators Perata, Sher, and Torlakson)

February 21, 2002

An act to amend ~~Sections~~ *Sections* 11265.1 and 18910 of, to add Section 18926 to, and to repeal Section 11265.2 of, the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to public social services.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2415, as amended, Keeley. CalWORKs.

Existing federal law provides for allocation of federal funds through the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant program to eligible states. Existing law provides for the CalWORKs program, pursuant to which state, county, and federal funds received through the TANF program are used by each county to provide cash assistance and other benefits to qualified low-income families.

Existing law requires an annual redetermination of eligibility for CalWORKs benefits. Existing law also requires the use of a monthly recipient reporting system to determine CalWORKs eligibility. Existing law, operative, on a phased-in basis, until January 1, 2006, provides instead for quarterly redetermination of eligibility, and,

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 30, 2002
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 1, 2002

INTRODUCED BY Assembly ~~Member Keeley~~
Members Keeley and Longville

:Coauthors: Assembly Members Chan, Dutra, Salinas,
Steinberg, and Wiggins)

:Coauthors: Senators Perata, Sher, and Torlakson)

FEBRUARY 21, 2002

An act to amend ~~Section~~ Sections
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11265.2 of, the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to public
social services.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2415, as amended, Keeley. CalWORKs.

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Existing law requires an annual redetermination of eligibility for CalWORKs benefits. Existing law also requires the use of a monthly recipient reporting system to determine CalWORKs eligibility. Existing law, operative, on a phased-in basis, until January 1, 2006, provides instead for quarterly redetermination of eligibility, and, among other things, specifies the contents of the quarterly reports required to be submitted by recipients, and the procedure to be followed when a recipient's benefits are terminated. Under existing law, the annual eligibility redetermination shall include a face-to-face interview, except as specified.

This bill would instead revise and recast the above provisions, as of January 1, 2003, to permanently eliminate the monthly reporting requirements, and replace them with the quarterly reporting requirements described above.

This bill would require that changes in the level of benefits provided under the CalWORKs program by this bill shall not be revised until the period for which the next quarterly report is required, unless voluntarily requested by the recipients, but would specify that any increase in benefits authorized by this bill shall not be funded through funds continuously appropriated for the CalWORKs program.

Because the bill imposes certain requirements on each county, the bill would constitute a state-mandated local program.

Existing law includes child care and other support services to eligible recipients of benefits participating in the CalWORKs program.

Existing law provides for the Medi-Cal program, which is administered by the State Department of Health Services, pursuant to which medical benefits are provided to public assistance recipients and certain other low-income persons.

This bill would require the State Department of Health Services to develop and print an information and referral form for distribution to recipients of benefits under the Medi-Cal program that contains referral information regarding support services funded by block grants made pursuant to the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, including, but not limited to, childcare.

Existing law provides for the Food Stamp Program, under which each county distributes food stamps allocated to this state by the federal government to eligible households.

0241

Existing federal law establishes eligibility requirements that a household may meet in order to participate in the federal Food Stamp Program, including, but not limited to, households with income or resources that do not exceed specified limits and in which each member receives benefits under a state program funded under certain provisions of federal law, including the TANF program, and with certain exceptions, households in which each member receives benefits under a state or local general assistance program that complies with federal standards.

This bill would specify that households with recipients of benefits funded by the TANF program to which the form required by this bill is sent shall be automatically eligible for food stamps in accordance with federal law.

To the extent this bill would increase the number of households to which counties are required to distribute food stamps, this bill would result in a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement, including the creation of a State Mandates Claims Fund to pay the costs of mandates that do not exceed \$1,000,000 statewide and other procedures for claims whose statewide costs exceed \$1,000,000.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: yes.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. *The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:*

(a) *The federal Food Stamp Program is an essential component in transitioning welfare recipients toward economic self-sufficiency and providing a safety net for vulnerable low-income populations, especially children of working parents.*

(b) *There is consensus at the national and state level that the federal Food Stamp Program is unnecessarily complex and difficult to administer. The federal General Accounting Office recently reported that eligibility determinations in the federal Food Stamp Program are cumbersome, wasteful, duplicative, and should be simplified.*

(c) *The current federal Undersecretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services reports that the complexity of program rules may cause errors and deter participation among people eligible for benefits, particularly working families, and recommends that burdensome collection of information from beneficiaries should be limited to only those items that are necessary to ensure the program operates properly.*

(d) *While the federal Food Stamp Program benefits are wholly federally funded, the state has a 35 percent share of the cost of administering the program and counties assume a 15 percent share. To the degree that unnecessary complexities in administration are simplified, the state and counties will realize a more efficient and cost-effective program.*

(e) *The United States Department of Agriculture performs a rigorous quality control over the federal Food Stamp Program to determine fiscal sanctions for states with high error rates and, authorizes enhanced administrative funding for states with very low error rates. California is likely to face federal sanctions based on its high error rate.*

(f) *California's high error rate is linked in large part to the*

unusually complex methods of monthly reporting and retrospective budgeting that the state uses to compute benefits.

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(g) The federal Food Stamp Program allows states to request a waiver to determine food stamp eligibility on a quarterly basis using prospective budgeting. States that utilize this waiver option have successfully reduced their error rates. Only eight states, including California, continue to use the error-prone monthly reporting system.

(h) The federal Food Stamp Program requires the state, once it opts; for either retrospective or prospective budgeting, to use the same budgeting methodology to determine eligibility under the state's program implementing the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, unless a federal waiver is obtained.

(i) Since the majority of Food Stamp Program beneficiaries are also recipients of benefits under the CalWORKs program, use of the same simplified reporting and budgeting methodology for administering both programs is cost effective, reduces errors, and eliminates duplicative determination efforts.

(j) States that utilize quarterly reporting with prospective budgeting not only reduce benefit errors but are successful in identifying fraud with no decline in the prosecution rate.

SFC. 2. Section 11265.1 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

11265.1. (a) Each county shall conduct a face-to-face interview with the recipient at the annual eligibility redetermination required by Section 11265, unless the recipient has regular contact with the county through the CalWORKs program, or another similar program. Subsequent face-to-face interviews with any recipient for purposes related to verification of eligibility or the provision of CalWORKs services may be conducted at the county's discretion.

b) In addition to the requirement for the annual redetermination of eligibility, the department shall establish regulations to implement a recipient quarterly reporting system for use in determining eligibility and the amount of the grant. ~~The quarterly report shall include the most recent month's income and circumstances, and any anticipated changes reported by the recipient for the quarter for which benefits will be paid. The department shall define what constitutes a complete report and shall specify the deadlines for submitting a complete report, as well as the consequences of, and good cause for, failure to submit a complete report. The department shall adopt fair and equitable regulations implementing the quarterly reporting requirement.~~

~~(c) In determining overpayments and underpayments the county shall use the federal food stamp regulations that are used to determine overissuances and underissuances for nonmonthly reporting households.~~

~~(1) If the recipient fails to submit a quarterly report by the date prescribed by the department the county shall provide the recipient with a notice, as required by the department, that the county will terminate benefits.~~

~~(2) Prior to terminating benefits, the county shall attempt to make personal contact to remind the recipient that a completed report is due, or, if contact is not made, shall send a reminder notice by mail to the recipient.~~

~~(3) Any notice of discontinuance shall be rescinded and aid shall be restored if the report is received by the first working day of the month for which aid is paid based on submission of the quarterly report.~~

~~(e)~~

(c) Each quarterly report shall provide information regarding only the current month's income for which the report is completed. Reporting shall be limited to only the eligibility events required under the federal Food Stamp Program.

(d) Each county shall use the information concerning the report month's income obtained in the quarterly report to prospectively determine and budget for the next quarter's eligibility and benefits.

Each county shall take into account the income already received by the family during the report month and any anticipated income the

family and county are reasonably certain will be received by the family. If the amount of income or when the income will be received cannot be reasonably determined, that portion of the income of the family that cannot be reasonably determined shall not be counted by the county. Any other eligibility change that occurs following the prior quarterly report shall be reported in the current eligibility quarterly report and shall be used to determine eligibility and benefits in the following quarter.

(e) (1) The level of benefits shall not be reduced during the period between quarterly reports with respect to changes that occur after the preceding quarterly report until they are reported in the following quarterly report.

(2) The level of benefits shall be adjusted upon submission of a report of a change in circumstances by an eligible family that would result in an increase in benefits or when the household has voluntarily requested that the case be closed.

(3) Any submission of a report of a change or changes in a family's circumstances shall be voluntary.

(4) When an eligible family elects not to submit a report of changes in circumstances, no overpayment, underpayment, or error shall arise due to a change in circumstances between quarters when no adjustment is made until the next regular quarterly report.

(5) Adjustments due to a change reported on the quarterly report shall be applied only to benefits commencing with the quarter following the report.

(6) Benefits shall not be adjusted retroactively regardless of the date the change actually occurred.

(7) The timing of adjustments in aid and benefits shall conform to the rules that are applied in the federal Food Stamp Program.

(f) Each county shall develop a mechanism to receive information about hourly work activities from adult recipients who are not participating in the welfare-to-work activities for the minimum number of hours required by Section 11322.8.

(g) If any recipient fails to submit a quarterly report, the county shall provide the recipient with a notice, pursuant to procedures adopted by the department, that the county will terminate the recipient's benefits. Prior to terminating a recipient's benefits, the county shall attempt to make personal contact with the recipient to remind the recipient that a completed report is due. If the county does not make personal contact, the county shall send a reminder notice to the recipient. Any notice of discontinuation of benefits shall be rescinded and aid shall be restored if the report is received by the first working day of the month for which aid is paid based on submission of the quarterly report.

(h) The department shall define what constitutes a complete report and shall specify the deadlines for submitting a complete report, as well as the consequences of, and good cause for, failure to submit a complete report. The department shall adopt fair and equitable regulations implementing the quarterly reporting requirement.

(i) The department shall seek all necessary waivers from the United States Department of Agriculture to conform the Food Stamp requirements to the provisions of this section.

~~SEC. 2.~~

SEC. 3. Section 11265.2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is repealed.

~~SEC. 3.~~

SEC. 4. Section 18910 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

18910. To the extent permitted by federal law, regulations, waivers, and directives, the department shall conform food stamp requirements to the requirements specified in Section 11265.1.

~~SEC. 4.~~

SEC. 5. Section 18926 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

18926. (a) (1) The State Department of ~~Health~~

Social Services shall develop and distribute an information and referral form to recipients of benefits under the Medi-Cal program.

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2) The department shall implement this subdivision with funds received for implementation of the CalWORKs program through a federal block grant made pursuant to the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program and that have been appropriated and are available for the purposes of this subdivision.

b) The form required by subdivision (a) shall contain referral information regarding support services funded by block grants made pursuant to the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, including, but not limited to, childcare.

c) Households with members to whom the form is sent pursuant to subdivision (a) shall be ~~automatically~~ **categorically** eligible for food stamps to the extent permitted by federal law.

SIX. 6. (a) Notwithstanding the rulemaking provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code, until July 1, 2003, the State Department of Social Services shall implement this act through all-county letters or similar instructions from the Director of Social Services, which shall be developed in a consultation with the County Welfare Directors Association and other interested stakeholders.

(b) The director shall adopt regulations to implement this act no later than July 1, 2003. Emergency regulations to implement this act may be adopted by the director in accordance with the rulemaking provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act. The initial adoption of emergency regulations and one readoption of the initial regulations shall be deemed to be an emergency and necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety, or general welfare. Initial emergency regulations and the first readoption of those emergency regulations shall be exempt from review by the Office of Administrative Law. The emergency regulations authorized by this section and one readoption of those emergency regulations shall be submitted to the Office of Administrative Law for filing with the Secretary of State and each shall remain in effect for no more than 180 days.

(c) No appropriation pursuant to Section 15200 of the Welfare and Institutions Code shall be made for the purpose of funding the benefit extension provided for in subdivision (e) of Section 11265.1 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

SIX. 7. Notwithstanding Section 17610 of the Government Code, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code. If the statewide cost of the claim for reimbursement does not exceed one million dollars (\$1,000,000), reimbursement shall be made from the State Mandates Claims Fund.

Assembly
California Legislature

0245

FRED KEELEY
Speaker pro Tem



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
April 26, 2002

CONTACT:
Fred Keeley, 916-319-2027

**FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO PENALIZE STATE
\$115 MILLION; KEELEY BILL TO RESOLVE ISSUE**

SACRAMENTO— On Tuesday, the Assembly Human Services Committee passed Assembly Bill 2415 by Speaker pro Tem Fred Keeley (D-Boulder Creek). This critically needed legislation would provide increased access to and efficiency for the Food Stamp and CalWORKs programs, while simultaneously saving the state millions of dollars. Additionally, today, the United States Department of Agriculture indicated that it will notify California of \$115 million in penalties for food stamp reporting errors.

“Faced with a \$20 billion shortfall this year, California cannot afford to use our scarce resources on otherwise avoidable problems,” noted Speaker pro Tem Keeley.

Since the federal government adopted its welfare reforms in 1995, California food stamp participation rates have plummeted by 46 percent, placing California seventh lowest in the nation in food assistance participation. California has a high rate of hunger and underutilization of food assistance programs, with less than half of the families eligible for food stamps receiving assistance. Much of this is attributable to California’s system of monthly income and asset reporting, which creates an excess of costs to the state, as well as an undue burden to program participants who submit 12 sets of paperwork per year.

This year, the United States Department of Agriculture and the General Accounting Office have strongly urged California to streamline its food stamp reporting system and eligibility standards. Currently, the federal government levies a penalty on states for a failure to respond to changes on a client’s income reports, as well as other payment-related inaccuracies. California ranks at the bottom tenth of states nationally.

AB 2415 would make two significant changes to the current system of reporting and eligibility. First, it would change the timeframe in which food stamp and CalWORKs recipients are required to report their income and assets from monthly to quarterly. Currently, California is one of only eight states that have not ended monthly reporting. This change would provide administrative relief for county caseworkers overburdened with paperwork, simplify the application process for eligible persons, and reduce reporting errors and consequent penalties.

Second, AB 2415 would streamline eligibility requirements between Medi-Cal and Food Stamps by eliminating duplicative qualifications and procedures. Federal law authorizes states to create eligibility links between food stamps and other health or job-support programs to reduce red tape and encourage food stamp participation. Many states, including, Oregon, Michigan and Maine have successfully employed this strategy to increase food stamp participation and increase the health and well being of needy families.

“By stripping away unnecessary administrative liabilities and reducing the red tape surrounding Food Stamps and CalWORKs, AB 2415 will allow California to capture the cost savings, making it easier for families in need to receive this assistance and the state to administer these much needed programs,” explained Keeley.

###

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<http://www.assembly.ca.gov/demweb/members/a27/>

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