



Catholic Charities

MARIN ♦ SAN FRANCISCO ♦ SAN MATEO

990 Eddy Street  
San Francisco, CA 94109

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[CatholicCharitiesSF.org](http://CatholicCharitiesSF.org)

The Honorable Senator Anthony Portantino  
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee  
State Capitol, Room 412  
Sacramento, CA 95814

May 17, 2023

**Re: Support for a Suite of Anti-Hunger Bills in the Legislature**

Dear Senator Portantino,

Thank you for your leadership and constant advocacy for policies that address the needs of the people of California during this critical time. I am writing to elevate another such issue to your attention: passing AB274 and AB605 (the CalFresh bills) and AB311 (the anti-hunger bill), along with complimentary Senate bills SB245 and SB 628.

At Catholic Charities of San Francisco, Marin, and San Mateo Counties, we provide comprehensive human services to the populations most vulnerable to food insecurity. Many of our clients are in poverty and often face decisions about whether to pay their rent or sacrifice feeding themselves and their families. These decisions have become increasingly frequent with the dramatic increase in the price of food staples at regional grocery stores, rising by approximately 13 percent between early 2021 and early 2023.

The impact of AB274 (Bryan), AB605 (Santiago), and AB311 (Santiago) along with SB245 (Hurtado) and SB628 (Hurtado), would provide the most at-risk residents of the three counties we serve with much-needed access to food and nutrition. The City of San Francisco's Food Security Task Force noted that 1 in 4 residences is at risk of hunger due to low income.<sup>1</sup> According to a major press outlet in the Bay Area, approximately 600 neighborhoods across the San Francisco metropolitan area have low access to food and are deemed "food deserts."<sup>2</sup> The impact of regional food insecurity increases health disparities and chronic health conditions of those populations that already face a range of environmental factors negatively impacting their health. Further, children and youth populations are also affected by the inaccessibility of healthy foods through establishing bad dietary practices and impeding physical development and academic performance.

Therefore, on behalf of Catholic Charities, we urge you to support AB274, AB605, AB311 with SB245 and SB628 to provide at-risk residents with access to affordable and accessible food and nutrition programs and ensure that no resident of the three counties goes hungry.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ellen Hammerle  
Chief Executive Officer

Patrick Woody  
Chair, Public Interest Board Committee  
Catholic Charities

Catholic Charities San Francisco, Marin, and San Mateo Counties  
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cc: The Honorable Melissa Hurtado, Author, California State Senate  
The Honorable Miguel Santiago, Author, California State Assembly  
The Honorable Isaac Bryan, Author, California State Assembly  
Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee:

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/comupg/knowlcol/FSTF/default.asp>

<sup>2</sup> <https://abc7news.com/food-desert-insecurity-bay-area-inflation-alameda-county/12487238/>



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The Honorable Brian W. Jones, Vice Chair  
The Honorable Angelique V. Ashby  
The Honorable Steven Bradford  
The Honorable Kelly Seyarto  
The Honorable Aisha Wahab  
The Honorable Scott D. Wiener