



MELISSA HURTADO

— CA STATE SENATOR • 16TH DISTRICT —

Senate Bill 628 Human Right to Food *Introduced, February 16, 2023*

SUMMARY

SB 628 declares it the established policy of the state that every human being has the right to access sufficient and healthy food.

PROBLEM

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 10 million Californians or as many as, one in four ~~already~~ struggled with food insecurity. The pandemic and resulting economic slowdown has only served to increase this number.

Pre-pandemic, a Kings County food bank indicated that they served on average 1,000 families a month. During the pandemic, this number has skyrocketed to an average of 6,000 families a month, which is an estimate of 14,460 individuals. A corresponding rise in need has been seen throughout the state.

California feeds the State, the Nation and the World, but not all of its residents know where their or their children's meal will come from. As California's population grows, as the climate gets warmer and as land usage changes, our ability to keep pace and feed the residents of this State will only be challenged further.

BACKGROUND

To address the nutrition needs of its residents, California offers support to its residents through federally funded CalFresh Benefits. In 2017, approximately 4.1 million Californians in 2 million households received CalFresh Benefits. A further 1.6 million individuals did

not receive the benefits for which they were eligible.

SOLUTION

SB 628 directs all relevant state agencies, including the Department of Social Services, the Department of Food and Agriculture, and the Department of Public Health to consider the human right to food when revising, adopting or establishing policies, regulations or grant criteria when they are related to the distribution of food and nutrition assistance. SB 628 also requires reporting on the current and future status of food, food production and food assistance.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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