

Please send a support letter – **On your letter head**
Sample Support Letter – Assembly Bill 1957 (Berman)

Send Email To: Irene.Frausto@asm.ca.gov or By Fax To: (916) 319-2189

Send Copy To: Elizabeth.schmitt@asm.ca.gov, Kevin.Aslanian@ccwro, sarah@cafoodbanks.org & jbartholow@wclp.org

Date _____ **Please Submit by**

Honorable Blanca Rubio
Chair, Assembly Human Services Committee
State Capitol, Room 5175
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support AB 1957 (Berman) – Modernizing Program Communications

Dear Chairperson Rubio:

[Name of Your Organization] supports Assembly Bill 1957 (Berman), which modernizes state laws governing communication for public social services and ensures the rights of applicants and recipients are protected. Specifically, this bill would define applicants' and recipients' rights to opt-in to electronic communications and to end electronic communication when they no longer want it. It would also direct counties to maximize electronic means of verifying information.

CalFresh provides monthly food benefits for qualified low-income households to purchase healthy food. California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) provides cash aid to help families pay for housing, toiletries, and other necessities. Low-income families face significant communication barriers, but new methods such as text technology represent accessible, efficient, and commonplace options for low-income communities.

California's Department of Social Services (DSS) and county human services agencies have been leaders in increasing access to applications, forms, and notices electronically, telephonically, and via computer-generated text message, which has improved efficiency for county workers and lead to greater outcomes for applicants and recipients. This bill would codify these existing practices by updating the Welfare and Institutions Code to establish communication procedures for CalFresh and CalWORKs that reflect modern technology. AB 1957 would allow public social services recipients and applicants to opt-in to electronic communication, including emails and computer-generated text messages. To ensure efficiency, AB 1957 also directs counties to maximize existing public human service databases to verify information, while restricting the use of privately maintained databases in order to maintain the privacy and accuracy of applicant and recipient information.

CalFresh and CalWORKs are our first line of defense against hunger and basic needs deprivation among our state's most vulnerable citizens and AB 1957 will ensure that while county human services agencies adapt to modern communication methods, the rights of applicants to and recipients of public social service programs are clearly defined. **[Name of Your Organization]** supports AB 1957 and respectfully requests your "Aye" vote.

Sincerely,

Your Name and Title

CC: Elizabeth Schmitt, Office of Honorable Marc Berman, California State Assembly (Author)
Kevin Aslanian, Coalition of California Welfare Rights Advocates (Co-Sponsor)
Jessica Bartholow, Western Center on Law and Poverty (Co-Sponsor)
Sarah Palmer DeFrank, California Food Bank Association (Co-Sponsor)