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AB-712 CalFresh: hot and prepared foods. (2023-2024)

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Assembly Bill No. 712

CHAPTER 121

An act to add Section 18919.1 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to public social services.

[Approved by Governor July 27, 2023. Filed with Secretary of State July 27, 2023.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 712, Wendy Carrillo. CalFresh: hot and prepared foods.

Existing law establishes various public social services programs, including, among others, the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program, CalFresh, and the Medi-Cal program. Existing federal law provides for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known in California as CalFresh, under which supplemental nutrition assistance benefits allocated to the state by the federal government are distributed to eligible individuals by each county.

This bill would require the State Department of Social Services to seek all available federal waivers and approvals to maximize food choices for CalFresh recipients, including hot and prepared foods ready for immediate consumption.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

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

SECTION 1. Section 18919.1 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

18919.1. (a) It is the intent of the Legislature to maximize food access for all CalFresh recipients. Many of the hungriest Californians who rely on CalFresh to eat face the most significant barriers, including the lack of kitchen facilities or means of preparing and cooking meals with groceries, special dietary needs, or specific foods required for medications, among other factors that strain the ability of traditional groceries to meet their needs. It is further the intent of the Legislature to maximize the dignity and equitable treatment of Californians using CalFresh to purchase food by maximizing food choices.

(b) The State Department of Social Services shall seek all available federal waivers and approvals necessary to maximize food choices for CalFresh recipients under federal law and guidance, including to purchase hot foods or hot food products ready for immediate consumption, pursuant to Section 3(k) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008.