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Betsy Butler

March 14, 2017

Honorable Scott D. Wiener
Chair, Senate Human Services Committee
1020 N Street, Room 521
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support SB 167 (Skinner) – Successful Re-Entry

Dear Senator Wiener:

On behalf of the California Women's Law Center, we write in support of Senate Bill 167 which enables county human services agencies to work with correctional facilities to facilitate pre-enrollment into CalFresh for jail inmates before they are released.

Current federal rules governing the CalFresh program make it difficult to pre-enroll inmates prior to their release. SB 167 calls for the California Department of Social Services (DSS) to seek authority from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to pre-enroll otherwise eligible, but incarcerated, Californians into CalFresh prior to their release. It also allows the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Social Security Administration so that individuals can apply to get a replacement social security card and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) while awaiting release.

Pre-enrollment ensures individuals have immediate access to essential benefits, and gives human services agencies more time to process applications in advance. Additionally, having CalFresh applications approved prior to release means these individuals can immediately participate in a job training program offered in their county.

Providing pre-enrollment access to these benefits will not only improve outcomes of a vulnerable population, but also will benefit public safety by increasing their chances of employment and financial stability, and thereby reducing their risk of reoffending.

For all these reasons, the California Women's Law Center supports SB 167.

Sincerely,

Betsy Butler
Executive Director