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March 21, 2019

The Honorable Melissa Hurtado
Chair, Senate Committee on Human Services
State Capitol, Room 2054
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 321 (Mitchell) - Support

Dear Senator Hurtado,

On behalf of the California Women's Law Center (CWLC), we write in support of SB 321, which will ensure families entering the CalWORKs program receive stable child care.

The lack of stable child care threatens families' ability to fully benefit from the CalWORKs program. The law requires affordable child care be available to recipients as they work or participate in welfare-to-work activities, yet many families entering CalWORKs do not receive the Stage 1 child care they need. Parents are often unaware they qualify for child care, and the process of obtaining child care authorization is burdensome. Families that do receive authorization usually experience sporadic and frequently disrupted care.

Stable child care is critical to strengthen parents' ability to work, attend domestic violence counseling or court proceedings, and participate in CalWORKs' required activities. Stable care also gives children a strong start, promoting healthy development and lifelong success. SB 321 will fulfill the promise made when CalWORKs was created 20 years ago that families would have affordable child care and would experience no break in these services as they transitioned through CalWORKs' three child care stages. SB 321 will streamline Stage 1 child care eligibility rules so that all families enrolled in CalWORKs are afforded the same reliable, continuous child care necessary to improve their family's success and end the cycle of poverty.

CWLC's mission is to break down barriers and advance the potential of women and girls through transformative litigation, policy advocacy and education. For 30 years, we have been on the frontlines fighting to secure families' economic security, strengthening communities across the state.

For these reasons, the California Women's Law Center supports SB 321.

Sincerely,



Betsy Butler
Executive Director