

April 19, 2017

The Honorable Jose Medina
Chair, Assembly Higher Education Committee
1020 N Street, Room 173
Sacramento, California 95814
Fax: (916) 319-3961

RE: Support AB 453 (Limón) – College Student Hunger

Dear Chairperson Medina:

MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger is pleased to support Assembly Bill 453 (Limón) which establishes an innovative approach to provide some support to food insecure students on California's college campuses. The "Food Insecure-Free Campus" designation would encourage and incentivize anti-hunger efforts on California's public university campuses.

According to California State University (CSU), 24% of CSU students experience hunger and 12% experience homelessness. In a survey recently conducted by the UC Regents, it was found that nearly one in five University of California students indicated that they had "very low" food security. Furthermore, the Wisconsin HOPE Lab, a research organization aimed at improving equity in higher education, reported that half of all community college students are struggling with housing and/or food insecurity.

As you may know, MAZON is a national anti-hunger organization, working to end hunger among people of all faiths and backgrounds in the United States and Israel. For over 30 years, MAZON has been at the forefront of identifying and addressing emerging needs for food insecure Americans. MAZON has made campus food insecurity one of its national advocacy priorities and we are keenly aware of the challenges and the very limited responses that have been proposed as strategies to meet those challenges. This program would establish California as a leader in addressing an issue that sadly is felt throughout the United States.

AB 453 establishes standards and creates incentives to encourage a statewide expansion of student meal sharing programs on public college campuses. It articulates an approach that takes into account the unique nature of each of California's public college and university systems, while offering them an opportunity to participate in a shared response to a shared challenge.

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* Titles for identification purposes only
** Past Chair

It is a national tragedy that students must forego opportunities to learn and excel because they simply do not have enough to eat. California must not allow food insecurity to undermine a student's opportunity to participate in its exceptional postsecondary educational institutions.

MAZON supports AB 453 (Limon) and respectfully requests your "Aye" vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Abby J. Leibman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Abby J. Leibman
President & CEO

CC: Mariana Sabeniano, Office of Assemblymember Shirley Weber,
California State Assembly (Author)

Jessica Bartholow, Western Center on Law and Poverty (Co-Sponsor)

Rachel Sumekh, Swipe Out Hunger

Christopher Nellum, Young Invincibles