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November 6, 2025

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor
State of California
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

I write to highlight an urgent issue facing our constituents amid the current lapse in appropriations: fraud in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known in California as CalFresh.

Congressional Democrats have chosen to shut down the federal government and withhold important services from the most vulnerable Americans. Our constituents are suffering, including our service members, law enforcement officers, air traffic controllers, and national parks and federal lands staff, among many others. Over 152,000 federal workers living in California — workers that provide services for the entire state — have missed their paychecks. This shutdown has jeopardized federal food assistance for more than 5 million Californians enrolled in CalFresh. I applaud the President for partially funding November 2025 benefits through the SNAP Contingency Fund, but benefits cannot be fully restored until Democrats quit playing politics and reopen our government.

Now more than ever is the time to ensure that CalFresh benefits are going to vulnerable Americans. According to a recent report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO), more than \$10.5 billion in improper SNAP payments were issued in fiscal year 2023 alone.¹ It is essential that we root out fraud in CalFresh, including providing benefits to illegal aliens, so that our low-income children, seniors, and veterans who are American citizens can receive their benefits during this Democrat-caused shutdown.

On April 24, 2025, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued guidance to State SNAP Agencies on Improving Eligibility Verification to Support Program Integrity. It directs states to collect more reliable documentation to verify identity, implement stronger safeguards against the fraudulent use of Social Security numbers, and make greater use of the Department of Homeland Security's Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE)

¹ <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-24-107461>

system available to states at no cost to simplify immigration status verification. Likewise, USDA issued a notice on July 10, 2025, entitled “Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA); Interpretation of “Federal Public Benefit”” to ensure that aliens who are not “qualified aliens” cannot receive any federal public benefits.

In light of the guidance put forth by the administration, I would like to request answers to the following questions:

1. What steps has California taken to comply with these commonsense requirements to detect fraud and abuse in the CalFresh program?
 - a. Since the April 2025 guidance, how many fraudulent payments were identified?
2. How has the state implemented the April 2025 guidance to prevent illegal immigrants from taking the benefits of our most vulnerable California citizens?
3. What oversight mechanisms are in place to ensure county or local offices are following these federal verification rules consistently?
4. What is the total number of CalFresh recipients whose eligibility was verified with the SAVE system in the last 12 months?
 - a. What percentage of verifications resulted in a determination of non-qualified status?
5. For fiscal years 2024 and 2025, how many CalFresh cases did the state deny or terminate because of failure to prove citizenship or qualified alien status?
 - a. What were the main reasons for denial or termination in each case?
6. What steps has California taken to train county employees on the use of the SAVE system and ensure compliance with the July 2025 PRWORA notice?

I urge you to take steps to combat abuse in the CalFresh program, especially during the current lapse in appropriations, so that illegal aliens are not prioritized over the most vulnerable citizens in our state and Americans can continue to put food on the table.

Sincerely,



Rep. Young Kim
Member of Congress, CA-40