



# HUNGER ADVOCACY NEWS

## Advocates Tell the Governor: “It’s Still Raining in California!”

Like most summer days in Sacramento, May 25 was warm and sun-soaked. The capitol steps, though, were covered in anti-hunger advocates wielding umbrellas.

Over 400 advocates descended on the capitol for Hunger Action Day this year to lobby for policies that prioritize ending hunger and poverty, and to ask Governor Brown, “Where is the hungry day fund?” Though the governor has directed a budget surplus towards the state’s rainy day fund, advocates showed up to tell lawmakers **it’s still raining in California, which despite unprecedented economic growth, continues to have the nation’s highest poverty rate.**

There was some good news this year, however. Several of the policies and budget items advocates lobbied for at Hunger Action Day were passed only weeks later. The 2017 State Budget repealed the CalWORK’s Maximum Family Grant, an unjust rule that made 130,000 children ineligible for aid.

The budget also included a \$4 increase to monthly Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments. SSI is a program that’s meant to provide a very basic income for seniors and people with disabilities.

When the state legislature made cuts to SSI during the Great Recession, they pushed 1.3 million



SSI recipients (who are ineligible for CalFresh) below the poverty line. While advocates saw the \$4-per-month increase as a down payment and an important first step, their main priority was advocating for a *full* restoration of SSI.

On Hunger Action Day, advocates spent the day in the capitol describing the struggle of choosing between basic necessities—food, housing, bills, or as one advocate shared, medicine that would help cure a case of bronchitis she’s been battling for months.

“We should never, ever ask our seniors to beg California to do the right thing,” said Assemblymember Tony Thurmond.

State Senator Holly Mitchell summed it up when she said that in the fight to end hunger and poverty, advocates should contact their

representatives year-round.

“Food insecurity?” she said. “Those two words shouldn’t even be in the same sentence!”

### 2017 State Budget Includes:

- A repeal of the CalWORKs Maximum Family Grant.
- \$2 million for State Emergency Food Assistance Program for food banks across the state
- \$4/month increase for all on SSI plus \$45 million for advocacy to increase enrollment
- Farm to Food Bank tax credit extended and increased to 15%.
- \$2 million for Breakfast after the Bell

## Your government

### U.S. House of Representatives

**Barbara Lee** (*Albany, Berkeley, Castro Valley, Emeryville, Oakland, Piedmont*)  
D.C. office: (202) 225-2661  
District office: (510) 763-0370

**Mike Honda** (*Fremont, Newark*)  
D.C. office: (202) 225-2631  
District office: (408) 436-2720

**Eric Swalwell** (*Alameda, Fremont, Hayward, Newark, San Leandro, San Lorenzo, Union City*)  
D.C. office: (202) 225-5065  
District office: (510) 370-3322 (*Hayward*)  
(925) 460-5100 (*Pleasanton*)

### U.S. Senate

**Barbara Boxer**  
D.C. office: (202) 224-3553  
District office: (510) 286-8537

**Dianne Feinstein**  
D.C. office: (202) 224-3841  
District office: (415) 393-0707

### California Governor

**Jerry Brown**  
Phone: (916) 445-2841

### State Senate

**Loni Hancock** (*Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, Piedmont*)  
Sacramento office: (916) 651-4009  
Oakland office: (510) 286-1333

**Bob Wieckowski** (*San Leandro, Hayward, Union City, Fremont, Pleasanton, Newark*)  
Sacramento office: (916) 651-4010  
Fremont office: (510) 794-3900

**Steve Glazer** (*Dublin, Pleasanton, Livermore*)  
Sacramento office: (916) 651-4007  
Local office: (925) 942-6082

### State Assembly

**Bill Quirk** (*Castro Valley, Hayward, San Lorenzo*)  
Sacramento office: (916) 319-2020  
Local office: (510) 583-8818

**Catharine Baker** (*Livermore, Pleasanton*)  
Sacramento office: (916) 319-2016  
Local office: (925) 328-1515

**Tony Thurmond** (*Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, Piedmont*)  
Sacramento office: (916) 319-2015  
Local office: (510) 286-1400

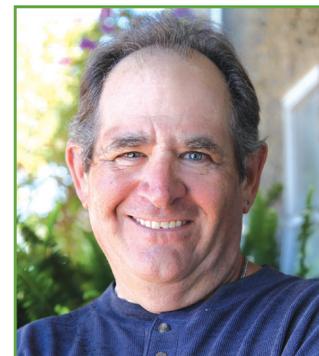
**Rob Bonta** (*Alameda, Oakland, San Leandro*)  
Sacramento office: (916) 319-2018  
Local office: (510) 286-1670

**Kansen Chu** (*Fremont*)  
Sacramento office: (916) 319-2025  
Local office: (408) 262-2501

Find legislators' contact info and even more ways to take action at [accfb.org/advocacy](http://accfb.org/advocacy).

## HUNGER ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT: Steve Summers

During the height of the Great Recession, Steve Summers saw how the economic downturn was forcing families to struggle and causing food insecurity rates to spike. He too was impacted after losing his job and, eventually, his apartment. Though he had been volunteering in the Food Bank's warehouse for years, he heard about our advocacy work and thought, "I could really have a voice here." Since then, Summers has been a non-stop anti-hunger advocate, traveling to Sacramento and encouraging others to join in the fight against hunger and poverty.



**How has being an anti-hunger advocate affected your view of hunger and poverty?** The thing about being so impacted by the recession and the alleged recovery is that you can really feel stigmatized and think, "I can't believe this is happening." When you start to advocate, you realize there are thousands of people in your position. You realize that hunger and poverty is a function of our economic and our political system—it's not about personal failings.

**What are you most proud of?** The highlights are the successful policy changes that immediately get food into people's hands, including the recent repeal of MFG. Also, seeing the political system firsthand is rewarding. I come away thinking, "With enough numbers, this could really make a difference."

**How do you handle frustrations? When bills or budget items don't get through—what keeps you going?** Try to turn it into action. The struggle against hunger and poverty is a long-term goal. That's also why we're always looking for a new generation of people to keep carrying this forward.

**Which historical figure do you admire most?** Astronomy is one of my hobbies and I've always admired Galileo. He discovered scientific proof that the earth

revolved against the sun which went against a lot of the teachings of the time. Still, he spoke the truth and they locked him away under house arrest for the rest of his life. I admire him for speaking truth to power.

**If someone doesn't have time to travel to Sacramento, can they still be an anti-hunger advocate?** Yes! As a voter, a tax payer, or a Californian, you already have the right to be an advocate. You can advocate by email, phone, or drop by representatives' district offices and talk to a staffer – who are sometimes more informed than representatives themselves!

**What are your best State Capitol travel tips?** On any given day in the Capitol, there are going to be a ton of other advocacy groups. Talk to them! It's unifying to see everyone involved in issues they care about.

### Get out the vote!

Help us register Alameda County voters to vote in the upcoming election.

Training starts in late July.

Contact Shanti at [sprasad@accfb.org](mailto:sprasad@accfb.org) or (510) 635-3663 ext. 307

### Community Advocates Meeting

Join our powerful Community Advocates group, which meets the third Thursday of every month, from 6 – 7:30 p.m.