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THIRD READING

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Bill No: AB 798  
Author: Calderon (D), et al.  
Amended: 8/29/25 in Senate  
Vote: 21

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SENATE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE: 5-0, 6/30/25

AYES: Arreguín, Ochoa Bogh, Becker, Limón, Pérez

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/29/25

AYES: Caballero, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 78-0, 6/3/25 - See last page for vote

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**SUBJECT:** State Emergency Food Bank Reserve Program: diapers and wipes

**SOURCE:** Los Angeles County Office of Education

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**DIGEST:** This bill requires California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to make diapers and wipes available to low income families during disasters through the State Emergency Food Bank Reserve Program.

**ANALYSIS:**

Existing Law:

- 1) Establishes in federal law the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program to provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives, and to end the dependence on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage. (45 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 260.2)
- 2) Establishes California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs), administered by CDSS, to provide cash benefits, employment training and other supports to low-income families through a combination of state and county funds and federal funds through the TANF block grant.

(Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 11200 et seq.)

- 3) Requires counties, at the time a person applies for CalWORKs, to determine if the applicant needs immediate assistance because the applicant does not have sufficient resources to meet their emergency needs. Examples of emergency situations include, but are not limited to, lack of housing, lack of food, notice of termination or loss of utility service, lack of essential clothing (including diapers), and inability to meet essential transportation needs. (WIC 11266(a))
- 4) Requires CalWORKs to include the costs of diapers for \$30 per month for participants who is participating in a welfare-to-work plan. (WIC 11323.2)
- 5) Requires CDSS to administer the State Emergency Food Bank Reserve Program to provide food and funding for the provision of emergency food and related costs to food banks serving low-income Californians to prevent hunger during natural or human-made disasters. (WIC 18995.1(a))
- 6) Defines “food banks” to mean participating providers operating in California under the federal Emergency Food Assistance Program or the federal Commodity Supplemental Food, members of the nonprofit organization Feeding America that are based in California, and members of the California Association of Food Banks. (WIC 18995.1(a)(2))
- 7) Authorizes CDSS, upon a proclamation or declaration of a disaster or state of emergency by the governing body of a county, city, or city and county, to distribute funds for the following purposes: to purchase and distribute food in eligible communities and to reimburse food banks for food and the costs associated with the procurement and distribution of food in eligible communities. (WIC 18995.1(b))

This Bill:

- 1) Makes findings and declarations about the necessity of diapers and importance of supporting low-income families who need diapers.
- 2) Adds children’s diapers and wipes to the supplies CDSS must provide to low-income Californians during a disaster through the State Emergency Food Bank Reserve Program.
- 3) Allows CDSS, upon a proclamation or declaration of a disaster or state of emergency, to distribute funds to purchase and distribute children’s diapers and wipes in eligible communities and reimburse food banks for children’s

diapers and wipes and the costs associated with the procurement and distribution of children's diapers and wipes in eligible communities.

## Comments

According to the author, "Children need diapers from the day they are born, and infants experience negative health outcomes without them. Unmet diaper needs are not only a public health issue, but also a barrier to economic mobility for families. Diapers cost approximately \$100/month per child and this cost can be exacerbated during times of crisis.

"AB 798 adds children's diapers and wipes to the State Emergency Food Bank Reserve Program, which would assist families with infants or toddlers during a Governor-declared state of emergency. During such emergencies, such as the 2025 LA County wildfires, Californians shouldn't have to choose between basic necessities and providing diapers for their children. AB 798 ensures they don't have to."

*Cost of Diapers.* According to the National Diaper Bank Network, a coalition of 240 member diaper banks, infants require up to 12 diapers per day and toddlers require about eight diapers per day. The National Diaper Bank Network also reports that disposable diapers cost on average \$80 to \$100 per month per baby and one in three families struggle to purchase diapers. The Diaper Bank, a nonprofit research group, reports that most licensed child care centers do not accept cloth diapers and require parents to supply their own disposable diapers for their children. The Diaper Bank also reports that low-income parents cannot take advantage of free or subsidized child care if they cannot afford to leave disposable diapers at child care centers. Without access to child care, parents are less able to attend work or school on a consistent basis. More than half (56%) of parents using child care to go to work have missed work because of an inadequate diaper supply. Additionally, for sanitary reasons, coin-operated laundromats often don't allow customers to wash cloth diapers.

When families do not have access to an adequate supply of diapers it can also lead to adverse medical conditions for their children. An American Journal of Public Health study found that, "diaper need is linked to multiple adverse infant and caregiver outcomes. Without diaper changes at regular intervals, young children are susceptible to dermatological and urinary tract infections. The stress of diaper rash and the experience of diaper need are associated with parental anxiety and elevated levels of maternal depressive symptoms."

*Federal Diaper Distribution Demonstration and Research Pilot.* Beginning September 2022, the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Community Services, in partnership with the Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Research, launched the first federal diaper assistance program, the Diaper Distribution Demonstration and Research Pilot, also known as the Diaper Distribution Pilot, which made \$8 million available to create its first federally funded diaper assistance program in six states (Washington, Arizona, Iowa, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina). The pilot's goal is to help address diaper needs and increase economic security for low-income families and provides funding to expand existing diaper distribution services through a network of community partners. In addition to providing diapers, pilot grantees and their partners, including, social service agencies and diaper banks, connect families to economic mobility and family support services, such as Early Head Start, job training and educational support, and housing services.

*California Diaper Distribution Programs and Food Banks.* Food banks, located throughout California, collect and distribute food to hunger-relief entities, like food pantries or food closets, which in turn distribute the food within their local communities. Food banks distribute United States Department of Agriculture food commodities through bags or boxes directly provided to those in need. Typically, these food distribution programs do not require clients to demonstrate necessity or eligibility. This makes food banks a natural partner to distribute diapers to families experiencing food insecurity.

The Diaper Bank program was established through the 2021 Budget Act with a \$30 million allocation for CDSS to provide grants to organizations to distribute diapers to low-income families with infants or toddlers. The Diaper Bank Program covers costs associated with the handling, transportation, and storage of diapers to low-income families in only eight counties through a number of select food banks. Since July 1, 2021, these organizations have served 818,741 children through the Diaper Bank Program. The organizations had to expend the allocated funds on or before June 30, 2024. In the 2024 Budget Act, the Diapers and Wipes Allocation was created through which the Legislature allocated \$9 million to the following food banks to distribute diapers and wipes to families in need: the Central California Food Bank, Jacobs and Cushman San Diego Food Bank, Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, Help a Mother Out, Community Action Partnership of Orange County, Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services, Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino, Redwood Empire Food Bank, Food Share Inc. of Ventura County, Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, and Second Harvest Food Bank Serving Santa Cruz. This bill taps into the relationship food banks have

established with low income families by providing CDSS a distribution system for diapers and wipes during a disaster.

*State Emergency Food Bank Reserve Program.* In 2024, the Legislature created the State Emergency Food Bank Reserve Program which requires CDSS to create food distribution program solely for low-income families after a natural or man-made disaster. According to the think tank, Focus First on Children, “children’s needs are too often sidelined in disaster recovery planning... Natural disasters also exacerbate existing inequities. Families of color, who are disproportionately low-income, are more likely to live in high-risk areas and face greater barriers to recovery.” This bill expands the emergency supplies distributed during any declared disaster to include diapers and wipes.

### **Related/Prior Legislation:**

SB 108 (Weiner, Chapter 35, Statutes of 2024) appropriated \$9 million from the General Fund for CDSS to fund local diaper and wipe distributions for low-income families.

AB 161 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 46, Statutes of 2024) created the State Emergency Food Bank Reserve Program.

AB 1015 (Calderon, 2023) would have established a statewide diaper and wipe distribution program under CDSS for qualifying low-income families. AB 1015 was vetoed by the Governor.

AB 128 (Ting, Chapter 21, Statutes of 2021) allocated \$30 million to CDSS to provide grants to organizations to provide diapers to low-income families with infants or toddlers.

SB 92 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 34, Statutes of 2019) as part of the 2019 Budget Act, exempted from sales and use tax the gross receipts from the sale in this state of, and the storage, use, or other consumption in this state of, diapers for infants, toddlers, and children, and menstrual hygiene products.

AB 480 (Gonzalez Fletcher, Chapter 690, Statutes of 2017) included a \$30-per-month benefit to assist with diaper costs for each child under three years old as a necessary supportive service pursuant to a CalWORKs participant’s welfare-to-work plan, required CDSS to develop implementing regulations, provided that no continuous appropriation for public assistance be made to implement the provisions of AB 480, and made technical changes.

AB 492 (Gonzalez, 2015) would have provided CalWORKs recipients participating in welfare-to-work activities, commencing October 1, 2020, necessary supportive services to also include a diaper benefit in the amount of \$50 per month for diapers for every child two years of age or younger enrolled in child care. This bill was vetoed by the governor.

AB 1516 (Gonzalez, 2014) would have provided CalWORKs recipients an \$80 per month young child special needs assessment, for the purpose of purchasing diapers, for every child two years of age or younger in the assistance unit. This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, there are unknown General Fund cost pressures to increase funding for the State Emergency Food Bank Reserve Program, due to expanding the allowable uses of any existing funding and creating additional demand for the program.

**SUPPORT:** (Verified 8/29/25)

Los Angeles County Office of Education (Source)  
California Association of Food Banks  
Child Care Resource Center  
Glendale; City of  
Grace - End Child Poverty CA  
Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank  
Western Center on Law & Poverty, INC.

**OPPOSITION:** (Verified 8/29/25)

None received

**ASSEMBLY FLOOR:** 78-0, 6/3/25

**AYES:** Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio,

Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa,  
Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas  
NO VOTE RECORDED: Ellis

Prepared by: Naima Ford Antal / HUMAN S. / (916) 651-1524  
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