

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 798 (Calderon)

As Amended August 29, 2025

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires the State Emergency Food Bank Reserve (SEFBR) Program to provide children's diapers and wipes, provide funding for the provision of children's diapers and wipes, and reimburse food banks for children's diapers and wipes during natural or human-made disasters.

Senate Amendments

Make conforming changes.

COMMENTS

Diaper Insecurity. Diaper insecurity is a widespread yet often overlooked challenge for families with young children, particularly those with low incomes. In California, approximately one in two families struggles to afford an adequate supply of diapers. For families living paycheck to paycheck, the high cost of diapers, often exceeding \$100 per month per child, can consume a significant portion of their income. For someone earning minimum wage in California, this expense can represent over 4% of their total earnings, placing a substantial financial strain on household budgets. This burden is especially acute for single parents, caregivers of multiple children, and families already facing other material hardships.

To cope with the high cost of diapers and wipes, many caregivers are forced to take desperate measures, including borrowing money from friends or family, stretching time between changes, reusing soiled diapers, using diapers that no longer fit, or even leaving children without diapers to make their limited supply last longer. These practices not only put children's health at risk, but can also lead to reports of neglect to Child Protective Services, potentially resulting in involvement with the child welfare system, adding further strain to families already struggling to meet basic needs.

Natural Disasters. California is experiencing increasingly frequent and severe natural disasters as a direct result of climate change, with profound impacts on families, especially those with young children. The state has seen its nine largest wildfires within the past decade, including the devastating 2025 Palisades and Eaton fires, which destroyed thousands of structures and displaced thousands of residents. According to California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment, the frequency of extreme wildfires burning over 25,000 acres is projected to increase by nearly 50% by the end of the century. Alongside wildfires, the state faces other climate-driven disasters such as floods, mudslides, heatwaves, and earthquakes, all of which can disrupt supply chains, displace communities, and restrict access to basic necessities.

Families with infants and toddlers are especially vulnerable during these emergencies, as evacuations and displacement often limit access to essential items like diapers and wipes. Shelters and emergency aid centers may not have sufficient supplies to meet the specific needs of young children, placing additional stress on parents already navigating the trauma of disaster. These climate events magnify existing economic and social vulnerabilities, making it even more urgent for the state to have infrastructure in place to respond to the unique needs of families during and after disasters. By acknowledging the growing frequency and intensity of natural

disasters, *this bill* aims to address these gaps, ensuring that families can access critical supplies when they need them most.

State Emergency Food Bank Reserve Program. The SEFBR, originally known as the State Disaster Food Assistance Program, is California's only state-funded emergency food distribution program. It was created in response to the growing frequency and intensity of natural and human-caused disasters in 2019 to support families facing sudden displacement and economic hardship. Administered by CDSS, the SEFBR is designed to ensure that food assistance can be deployed rapidly to communities impacted by emergencies such as wildfires, floods, and power shutoffs, particularly during the early stages of disaster response. Unlike federal relief programs, which are often delayed, require infrastructure restoration, or are not activated at all, the SEFBR fills critical gaps by delivering immediate support when it is most urgently needed.

The SEFBR allows CDSS to stock and distribute pre-packed food boxes and reimburse food banks for emergency-related expenses. These resources are critical in bridging gaps for families who suddenly lose access to food and basic supplies. For example, during the 2022 Six Rivers Fire, CDSS delivered 1,650 cases of emergency food to Humboldt County's local food bank, ensuring uninterrupted support to displaced residents. The Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Cruz County also relied on the program to support evacuees during atmospheric river storms and levee breaches in early 2023. Between 2019 and 2023, the program has delivered nearly 13,000 emergency food boxes and reimbursed food banks up to \$50,000 each for disaster-related operations.

This bill expands the SEFBR to include the provision of children's diapers and wipes during natural or human-made disasters. *This bill* also requires the program to supply and fund emergency diaper and wipe distribution and authorize the use of funds to purchase, distribute, and reimburse food banks for both the supplies and associated distribution costs in eligible communities.

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.

"[This bill] 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. [This bill] ensures they don't have to."

Arguments in Support

According to GRACE – End Child Poverty CA, "[This bill] is necessary because under existing state and federal law, diapers and wipes are not covered in social safety-net programs, such as CalFresh, the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, and Medi-Cal. While efforts have been made through previous budget allocations to provide diapers to families that need them most, funding has been temporary and diapers remain a burden for many. [This bill] will improve the health and overall well-being of children using diapers and wipes. Families need this support as one in two families struggle to afford diapers in the United States."

Arguments in Opposition

No opposition on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee on July 14, 2025, 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.

VOTESD:**ASM HUMAN SERVICES: 7-0-0**

YES: Lee, Castillo, Calderon, Elhawary, Jackson, Celeste Rodriguez, Tangipa

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 14-0-1

YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Hart, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Sanchez

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 78-0-1

YES: 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

ABS, ABST OR NV: Ellis

UPDATED

VERSION: August 29, 2025

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