**SB 982 (Mitchell) Support Letter Requested by Bill Sponsors**

Black Women for Wellness, California Interfaith Coalition, California Partnership, California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, Children’s Defense Fund-California, Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights, County Welfare Directors Association of California, Coalition of CA Welfare Rights Organizations, Friends Committee on Legislation of California, National Association of Social Workers, National Council of Jewish Women-California, Parent Voices California, Western Center on Law and Poverty

**Send Email To:** mark.teemer@Sen.Ca.Gov or by fax (916) 266-9350

**Send Copy To:** Alan.Moore@sen.ca.gov, mstillwellparvensky@childrensdefense.org & jbartholow@wclp.org

**Please Submit by March 30th**

Honorable Scott D. Wiener

Chair, Assembly Human Services Committee

1020 N Street, Room 521

Sacramento, CA  95814

**RE: Support SB 982 (Mitchell) – Childhood Poverty CalWORKs Grant Level**

Dear Chairperson Wiener,

[**Name of Your Organization**] supports SB 982 which will endeavor to end extreme poverty for children in the CalWORKs program.

Growing up in extreme poverty impairs children’s ability to learn, develop and thrive. Decades of research reveal the negative impacts of poverty on children’s health, educational achievement, and adult success. Children in deep poverty suffer the worst outcomes. Deep poverty causes toxic stress that harms brain development and early functioning, disrupting a child’s ability to succeed in school and in life. Even a short amount of time spent in deep poverty can derail a child emotionally, psychologically, physically, and educationally for a much longer time period.

Chronically unmet basic needs experienced by children living in deep poverty not only impact their health and well-being, but also their future potential. Children who live in deep poverty are less likely to graduate high school, more likely to have poor health as children and as adults, and more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system. Deep poverty damages the chance that a child will ever escape poverty and fuels an intergenerational cycle of poverty. Children who are born in deep poverty are three times as likely to be deeply poor at age 40 than children not born in deep poverty.

The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program provides basic needs cash aid and services to low-income families with children to alleviate the impact of poverty on children and help parents overcome barriers to employment. The CalWORKs program serves 1.1 million individuals in California, 80 percent of whom are children. Yet, the level of support provided to CalWORKs families is insufficient to meet basic needs and lift all of these children out of deep poverty. The current maximum grant for a family of three is $714 or 41 percent of FPL. However, most families receive less than the maximum grant: the average CalWORKs grant for a family of three is $556 per month, or 33 percent of FPL.

SB 982 will endeavor to end deep poverty in the CalWORKs program. By doing so, this bill will protect children from the worst harms of chronically unmet basic needs and better enable the CalWORKs program to achieve its goals. [**Name of Your Organization**] supports SB 982 and respectfully requests your “Aye” vote.

Sincerely,

[**Name]**

CC: Alan Moore, Office of Senator Holly J. Mitchell (Author)