



LUTHERAN OFFICE of PUBLIC POLICY - CALIFORNIA

May 7, 2020

The Honorable Hannah-Beth Jackson
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 2032
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: 1383 (Jackson), Strengthening the Family School Partnership Act During Emergencies - SUPPORT

Dear Senator Jackson,

The Lutheran Office of Public Policy – California writes in strong support of Senate Bill 1383, which will provide working parents with the essential job protection they need to care for their children without risking their job during an emergency.

Our office represents four hundred congregations throughout the state, from Yreka to Chula Vista. In our guiding social statement on Economic Life, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America affirms our moral imperative to seek sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all. We believe that “no one should be coerced to work under conditions that... result in neglect of their family’s wellbeing.”¹ When infrastructures for sustainable and dignified livelihood are absent, weak, or threatened, people are more likely to be impoverished materially, emotionally, or spiritually.

As a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic, 99.6% of California’s K-12 school districts closed, impacting 6.2 million students and their families. During the 2018-19 school year, wildfires and similar disasters resulted in school closures impacting more than 1.2 million students. A vast majority of children live in families where both parents work or families that are headed by a single parent. That means that when the child’s school or daycare is not available, a parent must leave work in order to provide the care that the child needs. This bill would protect these families by providing job-protected leave to parents whose children’s daycare or school closes due to an emergency for the duration of the emergency.

California has recognized the challenges faced by working parents by passing the Family School Partnership Act, which provides up to 40 hours of job-protected, unpaid time off per year for

¹ “A Social Statement on: Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All,” adopted by a more than two-thirds majority vote by the sixth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, meeting in Denver, Colorado, August 16-22, 1999.



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parents to participate in their child's school or licensed day care facility's activities, and by strengthening these protections through the Family Engagement Act in 2015. SB 1383 expands on these essential protections by ensuring that all parents, regardless of the size of their employer, are able to care for their child when an emergency strikes and their child's school or place of care becomes unavailable for the duration of that emergency. Parents should not be forced to count down the hours until they will be fired for caring for their child during a pandemic or natural disaster.

This bill will allow working parents to keep their jobs while fulfilling their parental obligations during crises. The bill will also benefit employers by strengthening employee morale and job retention for working parents.

No Californian should have to choose between keeping their job and caring for their child. For these reasons, Lutheran Office of Public Policy - California strongly supports SB 1383.

Sincerely,

Regina Q. Banks
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