



555 West Washington Ave, Suite 200
Madison, WI 53703

www.wccf.org
☎ 608-284-0580
✉ 608-284-0583

Date: May 4, 2009
To: Joint Finance Committee members
From: Jim Moeser, Deputy Director
Subject: Food Share Benefits for Legal Immigrants (LFB Paper 443),
Support Alternative 3

Since 1998, Wisconsin has provided food stamp benefits to immigrants in our state who are legal U.S. residents but not eligible for federal food stamp benefits. WCCF strongly supports the state option food stamp program (SOFSP), and **we urge you to support alternative #3 in LFB paper #443.**

Even though recent immigrant children are eligible for Food Share, research confirms that their families are still many more times likely to experience food insecurity. This insecurity has serious and lasting effects on young children's growth and development. Nutrition provides the building blocks for early childhood brain development. Proper nutrition (or lack thereof) influences cognitive, motor skills development, linguistic, social and self regulation and educational attainment.

As the Fiscal Bureau paper indicates, the 825 people who receive SOSFP benefits comprise only 0.16 of the total Food Share caseload in Wisconsin. This is a very important benefit for those families, whose average income is about 88 percent of the federal poverty level. During the current recession, it is all the more important to retain this source of nutrition assistance for these lawfully present immigrants.