

DATE

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez  
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee  
California State Capitol, Room 2114  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Sent via Fax: (916) 319-2181

**Re: AB 1721 (Medina) – The California Affordability Pledge**  
**Position: Support**

Dear Assemblymember Gonzalez:

On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_, I write to inform you of our **support for AB 1721 (Medina)**, legislation reforming Cal Grants to better serve community college students.

Last year, President Obama recognized the importance of reducing financial barriers for obtaining a post-secondary degree or credential by proposing free tuition for those attending community college. Through the Master Plan for Higher Education, California has provided free or low-cost tuition for over thirty years. At California community colleges, nearly 60% of all students attend tuition-free and for those who do pay we offer the lowest fees in the nation. It is by far the largest and furthest reaching free community college plan in the nation.

Despite the low tuition levels our students pay, once the total cost of attendance and all available financial aid is taken into account – institutional, state and federal – for a financially disadvantaged student it is generally more expensive to attend a California Community College than the University of California or the California State University. This is because the Cal Grant program does not equitably serve community college students.

Currently, community college students are only eligible for the Cal Grant B Access award. This lack of financial aid support forces community college students to work more, take a reduced course loads and focus less on their classes. By making a relatively small and targeted investment in our students, AB 1721 (Medina) would save the state money by helping our students complete their degrees sooner. This will save the state on total resources needed to educate students, ensure individuals are moving through their education pathways efficiently, and create the capacity to serve more Californians in need. Additionally, by helping community college students obtain their degrees quicker this bill will help our students make meaningful contributions to the state's economy and tax system.

AB 1721 (Medina) would make various changes to the Cal Grant program that would reform Cal Grants to better serve community college students. Specifically it would:

- **Increase the Cal Grant B Access Award to \$3,000.**
- **Increase the number of competitive awards to 30,000.**
- **Increase the age limit to be eligible for the transfer entitlement and extend the application deadline.**

Each of these reforms will increase the amount of financial aid resources available to community college students to complete their educational goal. We respectfully urge you to support AB 1721 (Medina). Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

NAME

TITLE

PHONE NUMBER

E-MAIL

CC: Assemblymember Jose Medina, (916) 319-2061  
Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee  
Christian Osmena, Department of Finance, (916) 323-9539  
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