DATE

The Honorable Jose Medina

Chair, Assembly Higher Education Committee

California State Capitol, Room 173

Sacramento, CA 95814

Sent via Fax: (916) 319-3961

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

**Position: SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Medina:

On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I write to express our **support for AB 1721 (Medina), the College Affordability Pledge** legislation that will reform Cal Grants to better serve community college students.

Last year President Obama created momentum around the importance of reducing financial barriers of obtaining a higher education degree by proposing free tuition for those attending community college. With 32 years of a commitment to access and affordability through the Board of Governors Fee Waiver, , California is evidence that our commitment to college affordability must extend beyond tuition costs. . At California’s community colleges, nearly 60% of our students receive free tuition and for those who do, pay the lowest fees in the nation. It is by far the largest and farthest reaching free community college plan in the nation.

Despite the low levels of tuition our students pay, once the total cost of attendance and all available financial aid is taken into account – institutional, state and federal - it is generally more expensive for a financially disadvantaged student to attend a California community college than the University of California or the California State University.

Currently, community college students are only eligible for the Cal Grant B Access award. This lack of financial aid support has forced community college students to work more, take a reduced course load and focus less on their classes.

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. We ask you to support AB 1721 (Medina). Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about our support.

Sincerely,

NAME

TITLE

PHONE NUMBER

E-MAIL

 CC: Assemblymember Jose Medina, (916) 319-2161

 Community College League of California, (916) 444-2954