DATE, 2018

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher

Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee

California State Assembly

State Capitol, Room 2114

Sacramento, CA 94249

**RE: SB 1406 (Hill): Community College Baccalaureate Degree Pilot Program**

**Position: SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Gonzalez Fletcher:

On behalf of ORGANIZATION, I am writing in strong support for Senate Bill 1406 (Hill) to extend the student registration provision for the community college baccalaureate pilot program to the 2022-23 academic year.

The 15 community college pilot baccalaureate programs have discovered that the current pilot sunset date of 2023 creates programmatic obstacles for current and future students, and it taints the analysis of the pilots by introducing a variable affecting enrollment and related operational issues.

The 2023 sunset date deters students from enrolling since they are concerned with completing the programs in advance of the deadline. This not only deters future enrollment in the programs, it contaminates the analysis of the pilot program by introducing an artificial barrier to enrollment. Moreover, extension of the registration period would offer more data for the Legislative Analysts’ Office (LAO) analysis of the pilot programs.

SB 1406 provides a necessary modification to the existing community college baccalaureate pilot program. These degrees will increase student access to career education programs and benefit local employers and communities. Further, by extending the enrollment date, colleges can continue essential partnerships with local high schools to recruit prospective students without the fear of the program being eliminated in four years.

Given that a number of career fields and employers that now require or give preference to a bachelor's degree, and the fact that public universities do not offer these programs that lead directly to jobs, twenty-two states have already authorized their community colleges to confer bachelor degrees in selected workforce fields. Over eighty community colleges nationally now offer over five hundred bachelor's degrees in these fields.

Several characteristics are already abundantly clear among the bachelor's programs in the pilot:

* The programs address specific workforce needs in their regions.
* Public universities in California do not offer bachelor's degree programs in these fields.
* These programs serve a diverse student population, with 63% coming from  underrepresented groups and 72% being women.
* The programs are high-quality- often building upon successful associate degree programs already being offered - and low-cost, with the total cost for students for all four years being $10,560. Thus, associate degree students now have a defined and locally- accessible pathway to the baccalaureate in their field of study.

Workforce education and training is central to the mission of California’s community colleges. Thus, these applied baccalaureate degree programs are logical extensions of our mission. In the absence of affordable and accessible workforce degrees, students seeking these fields have only two options: either leave the state or enroll in high-cost programs in private or for-profit institutions whose track records of success are dubious and whose students are often left with crushing debt.

Senate Bill 1406 addresses both of the aforementioned concerns and will provide policymakers and California Community College stakeholders the means to effectively evaluate these 15 pilot baccalaureate degree programs. Additionally, our analysis finds that implementation costs are minor and absorbable.

ORGANIZATION respectfully urges your support for SB 1406. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our support of SB 1406, please contact \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,

Name

Organization

Contact

cc:

The Honorable Jerry Hill

Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee

Community College League of California