INSERT COLLEGE LOGO/USE COLLEGE LETTERHEAD

DATE

The Honorable FIRST NAME LAST NAME

ADDRESS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

**Re: Undocumented Students at California Community Colleges**

**Position: Support for DACA, H.R. 6 and a Pathway to Citizenship for Recipients**

Dear Congressmember [Congressional Representative Name]

I am writing to inform you of my **strong support for programs and legislation that support undocumented students at California’s community colleges.** TheCalifornia Community Colleges (CCC) is the largest system of public higher education in the United States. Our 115 colleges across 73 districts serve 2.2 million students, which includes two-thirds of the undergraduate students in the state. California is home to thousands of undocumented students and their families. Of the estimated 223,000 California DACA participants (totally 800,000 nationwide), approximately 72,000 are enrolled at California Community Colleges. Many recipients have built their lives in the U.S.—most who are now working, studying in college, and/or enlisting in the armed services.

The California Community Colleges, alongside the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU) systems, provide access to affordable, high-quality public education. By providing undocumented students with the means to pursue higher education the CCCs are positioning them to contribute meaningfully to California’s economic, social, and cultural fabric. The displacement of undocumented students and the elimination of DACA could dramatically impact the nation’s current labor market demand for a highly skilled and well-trained workforce.

Supporting our undocumented and immigrant students has significant economic benefits for California and the United States. According to the CATO Institute, without undocumented student policies like DACA, the U.S. economy could shrink by $215 billion over the next 10 years. The same study found that the federal government could lose $60 billion in foregone income taxes if policies supporting undocumented students are not enacted.

President Trump and the Administration’s continued attacks on undocumented individuals as well as Congress’ failure to take action on numerous egregious proposals against this population has created deeper fear and uncertainty among our undocumented students. A recent example is the proposed change to federal Public Charge Rules. By considering the utilization of public benefit programs when determining eligibility for permanent residency, the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) new interpretation has discouraged students from utilizing programs like the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF) and created worry that federally funded financial aid programs, like grants or work-study, might be counted as a public benefit under the new interpretation of the rule. Ultimately, the net result of this new interpretation will be a reduction in undocumented students utilizing public benefits that can support economic and social mobility.

Students, faculty and campus leaders at (College Name) support continuing protections for undocumented and immigrant students, coupled with legislation establishing a pathway to citizenship.

**I strongly urge you and Congress to:**

1. Support legislation like **H.R. 6** (the 2019 American Dream and Promise Act), which would create a pathway to citizenship for undocumented students who were brought into this country as children and permit them to be eligible for Title IV financial aid programs like Pell Grants and Work-Study.
2. Vote in support of **H.R. 3222** (No Federal Funds for Public Charge Act of 2019), which would prohibit the Department of Homeland Security from moving forward with the new interpretation of the public charge rule.
3. Provide a permanent solution to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.
4. Exempt students receiving assistance via the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, as that is primarily an educational benefit and thus is in the spirit of the new interpretation of the rule.
5. Address the humanitarian crisis at the border.

Sincerely,