DATE

The Honorable Gavin Newsom

Governor, State of California

California State Capitol, 1st Floor

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 1456 (Medina): Cal Grant Reform**

Position: **Request for Signature**

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of DISTRICT NAME, **I respectfully request your signature on Assembly Bill 1456 by Assembly Members Jose Medina, Kevin McCarty, and Senator Connie Leyva,** which will bring much-needed reform and modernization to California's system of financial aid.

The state's main financial aid system – Cal Grants – creates artificial barriers for qualifying for financial aid. Our students receive minimal benefits from the state's main system of financial aid. While community college students make up roughly two-thirds of the students in this state, they receive less than one-third of the total amount of awards and less than ten percent of the funding. This lack of investment in our students has resulted in a state system of financial aid that makes it more expensive for a low-income student to attend a community college than a University of California or a California State University institution.

Cal Grants are primarily focused on tuition and do not adequately factor in the high living costs in California. While tuition may be a relatively low barrier for our low-income students, they still struggle to pay rent, purchase food, or support their families. With low levels of financial aid support, our students must work more and take fewer classes impacting their academic success. A 2020 study by The Institute for College Access and Success found that our low-income students had to work between 25-40 hours a week on a minimum wage job to meet their living costs once all available financial aid is considered.

AB 1456 will change this by simplifying the various Cal Grant programs. It would combine the existing Cal Grant A, B, and C programs into two offerings – one for two-year students and another for students at four-year institutions. Both would take into account the existing gaps regarding financial aid for each category of institution. The new award for two-year students, Cal Grant 2, would maintain the current Cal Grant B award of $1,656, which would be tied to inflation.

Again, we respectfully request your signature of AB 1456. If you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at E-MAIL or PHONE NUMBER.

Thank You,

-SIGNATURE-

FIRST NAME LAST NAME

DISTRICT NAME

ORGANIZATION NAME

CC: Assemblymember Jose Medina

Joey Freeman, Chief Deputy Legislative Affairs Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom

Jake Brymner, Director of Government & External Relations, California Student Aid Commission

 Ryan McElhinney, Community College League of California