



September 13, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor of California
 Office of the Governor
 1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
 Sacramento CA, 95814

RE: AB 1456 (Medina, McCarty, Leyva) – Request for Signature

Dear Governor Newsom:

As a diverse coalition of higher education advocacy, civil rights and social justice, business and workforce, and student leadership organizations united in strengthening state need-based financial aid so that all Californians can afford to successfully earn a higher education credential, **we write in strong support of AB 1456 (Medina, McCarty, Leyva), which would build upon the recent historic budget investments to expand access to the Cal Grant program** by streamlining and simplifying it, removing barriers to Cal Grant

access based on GPA, and ensuring that California’s least resourced students continue to be prioritized and supported through these investments.

Ensuring that all students receive the awards for which they are eligible remains an urgent priority for the state, as reflected in the 2021-22 budget’s lifting of the time-out-of-high school and age restrictions on the Cal Grant for California community college (CCC) students. **AB 1456 takes this milestone budget action one step further by removing GPA limitations for the lowest income CCC students (those eligible for the maximum federal Pell Grant).** With CCCs serving the majority of the state’s students of color, these colleges play a critical role in closing equity gaps in higher education access and success.

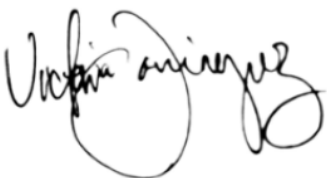
Additionally, **AB 1456 takes important steps to ensure the access award that helps cover non-tuition college costs does not drop below the current maximum of \$1,656 and includes a much-needed automatic annual growth factor** by tying the Cal Grant 2 (now the CCC entitlement) access award to the California Consumer Price Index to avoid the further decline in value that the award has experienced over the years – had the award kept pace with inflation it would be worth over \$7,000 today.

AB 1456 also provides guidance for future investments and implementation efforts. This bill provides an opportunity to streamline and simplify the Cal Grant program and continue efforts to close racial equity gaps by consolidating the multiple current Cal Grant awards into a Cal Grant 2 and Cal Grant 4 and aligning it with forthcoming changes to federal needs analysis.

We applaud the steps that AB 1456 takes towards dismantling long standing structural issues that have kept too many students from receiving a Cal Grant. The recent budget investments, combined with the supporting changes that AB 1456 offers will make the Cal Grant program easier for students and families across the state to navigate, ultimately expanding college affordability for thousands of Californians. We look forward to continuing to partner with state leaders and the California Student Aid Commission to support equitable implementation of these legislative reforms.

AB 1456 (Medina, McCarty, Leyva) is vital to eliminating barriers to state financial aid and ensuring the state’s economic path out of the pandemic is equitable. **For these reasons we support AB 1456 and respectfully request your signature when the bill comes before you.**

Sincerely,



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Policy Director
Asian Americans Advancing Justice –
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Senior Policy Manager
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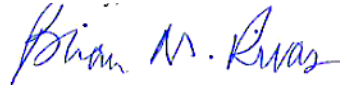
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California Affordability Program Director
The Institute for College Access & Success



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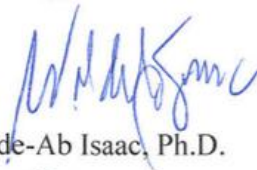
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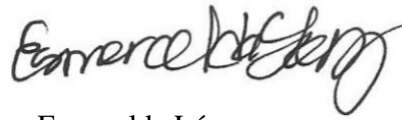
Arnie Sowell Jr.
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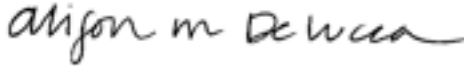
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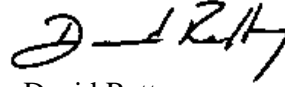
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CC: Assemblymember Jose Medina
Assemblymember Kevin McCarty
Senator Connie Leyva
Joey Freeman, Chief Deputy Legislative Affairs Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
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