Dear Chairman Newman,

On behalf of The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS), I would like to express strong support for Assembly Bill 2458, authored by Assemblymember Marc Berman, which would improve college affordability, access, and success for student parents in California.

California is home to approximately 400,000 student parents, a majority of whom are first-generation and students of color. Despite having greater food, housing, childcare, and transportation costs than their non-parenting peers, the costs are not accounted for in their student expense budgets. This creates barriers in accessing and completing higher education.

Currently, student parents have to individually request adjustments to their cost of attendance to account for their parenting expenses. In some cases, student parents are asked to provide further proof of their child-rearing costs or are incorrectly denied adjustments. This process is not standardized across institutions, resulting in unnecessary burdens on students and financial aid administrators. In fact, the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that student parents are not maximizing their federal financial aid.

Additionally, because campuses do not systematically identify student parents, the limited actionable data on their needs and outcomes makes it harder to design and provide tailored support.

AB 2458 would ensure student parents can access the financial aid they are entitled to and improve data collection for student parents. Specifically, the bill would:

1. Require automatic financial aid cost of attendance adjustments for student parents to better account for their expenses, thereby maximizing access to available financial aid;
2. Require institutions to uniformly collect and report data on student parents to system offices; and
3. Share student parent data from the higher education system offices with the Office of Cradle-to-Career Data for inclusion in the longitudinal data system, allowing California to evaluate and identify policies that support student parent success.
Comprehensively identifying student parents and increasing their access to financial aid will allow student parents to better plan for, afford, and navigate their educational pathways. TICAS urges you to vote “aye” on AB 2458 at the appropriate time.

Sincerely,

Emmanuel Rodriguez
Director, Policy and Advocacy
The Institute for College Access and Success

CC: Members, Senate Committee on Education
Olgalilia Ramirez, Principal Consultant