Senator Josh Newman,
Chair, Senate Education Committee
1021 O St., Room 6740
Sacramento, CA 95814

As Amended May 16, 2024

Dear Chair Newman,

On behalf of The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS), we are pleased to SUPPORT Assembly Bill 2500. This bill streamlines the current process of extending the financial aid deadline for students experiencing emergency conditions by empowering the California Student Aid Commission to approve extension requests from institutions, along with giving additional time to submit requests during an emergency.

TICAS prides itself on its commitment to advocating for the expansion of college access and affordability for all current and prospective students. AB 2500 amplifies the authority of the Commission to ensure that all California students at institutions of higher education can apply for student financial aid while facing certain circumstances that significantly affect the ability to meet existing deadlines.

After several years of implementation, the current emergency extension process has been underutilized; many students living in communities that have experienced known emergency conditions who are eligible for this benefit have not applied and received it. This is disproportionately true among those living in smaller, rural areas who may not have the resources to know about and proactively submit requests for the application extensions they qualify for. These same communities experience a higher proportion of late financial aid applications, which means potentially missing out on thousands of dollars in available state aid, along with other notable local challenges such as declining enrollment and lack of access to higher education institutions.
AB 2500 will ensure that students living through regional or statewide emergencies will be granted the additional time they need to successfully apply for financial aid.

AB 2500 embodies our commitment to making higher education accessible and affordable, particularly for students from underserved communities. By streamlining financial aid extensions for those in emergency situations, it addresses critical barriers to education access and equity. This bill aligns with the goal to support diverse student populations, ensuring they have the necessary resources to pursue and complete their education, thus creating a more inclusive and responsive higher education system.

For these reasons, TICAS SUPPORTS AB 2500 (Fong) and respectfully requests your ‘Aye’ vote at the appropriate time.

Sincerely,

Emmanuel Rodriguez
Director of Policy and Advocacy, California
The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS)

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