



March 28, 2018

Senator Benjamin Allen
 Chair, Senate Education Committee
 State Capitol, Room 5072
 Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1471 (Hernandez) – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Allen:

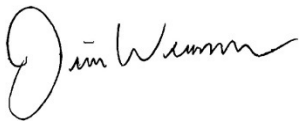
As advocates for higher education access and affordability, we are writing to express our support for SB 1471 (Hernandez). This bill would increase from 25,750 to 30,000 the number of competitive Cal Grant awards that may be granted in an academic year.

California college students who meet Cal Grant eligibility requirements are guaranteed a Cal Grant if they are recent high school graduates who meet the application deadline. But students who apply late or enroll in college more than one year after high school graduation have to compete for a limited number of awards: just 25,750 competitive Cal Grants are authorized each year. In 2001-02, the year of the current competitive program's inception, eligible applicants had a one in four chance of getting a competitive award; today, those odds are one in *sixteen*. The majority of eligible applicants denied an award have incomes so low the federal government estimates they cannot afford to put any financial resources towards paying for college.

The odds confronting these applicants are far too long, and the contenders far too deserving, for policymakers to continue accepting the status quo. By raising the annual number of authorized competitive Cal Grants to 30,000, SB 1471 would help many more underserved students receive a grant that will help them afford to get to and through college.

Our ability to improve college attainment, close equity gaps, and enable more Californians to earn college degrees can only occur if we make college affordability for all – not just those transitioning straight from high school to college – a reality. **For these reasons we strongly support SB 1471 (Hernandez). We respectfully urge your AYE vote when the bill comes before you in the Senate Education Committee on April 4, 2018.**

Sincerely,



Jim Wunderman, President & CEO
Bay Area Council



Leigh Phillips, Chief Executive Officer
EARN



Taylor Myers, Policy and Research Analyst
California Competes



Ryan J. Smith, Executive Director
The Education Trust-West



Rona Sherriff, Co-Director
California EDGE Coalition



Debbie Cochrane, Vice President
The Institute for College Access & Success



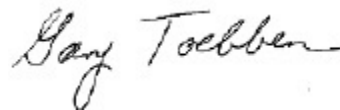
Alice Huffman, President
California State Conference of the NAACP



Amy Lemley, Executive Director
John Burton Advocates for Youth



Jessie Ryan, Executive Vice President
The Campaign for College Opportunity



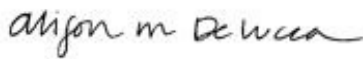
Gary L. Toebben, President & CEO
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce



Jeannette Zanipatin, Legislative Staff Attorney
MALDEF



Magali Kincaid, Higher Education
Policy Advocate
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Alison De Lucca, Executive Director
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Tabitha Romero, Vice President of
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**Student Senate for California Community
Colleges**



Laura Keane, Chief Policy Officer
uAspire



Judith Gutierrez, President
University of California Student Association



Kristen McGuire, Western Director of
Partnerships & Organizing
Young Invincibles

CC: Senator Ed Hernandez
Olgalilia Ramirez, Consultant, Senate Education Committee
Members, Senate Education Committee