



CERRITOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

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Office of the President

May 17, 2018

Senator Holly Mitchell
Chair of Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review
State Capitol, Room 5080
Sacramento, CA 95814

Letter of Support for the Governor's Online College Plan

Dear Senator Mitchell:

Given your career's focus on children, education and equity, I am sure you will find it troubling that more than two million Californians have attended college, but do not have a degree. That means millions of state residents are locked into low-wage jobs because they have no time or resources to return to school to complete a degree or training program. As a result, the state is losing an opportunity to benefit from having a more expansive, well-trained workforce that can meet the job demands of California.

The Governor's proposed online college plan is a viable option to address the changes in the economy and population. The plan provides an option for upward mobility to a hard-to-reach population through a remote system of higher education and training. The online college focuses on work-force credentials and nondegree certificates. Today, there are hundreds of these specialized credentials, certifications, and licensures. What they have in common is training that meets the needs of specific occupations. These middle skills jobs require more than a high school education, but less than a college degree.

Industry-recognized credentials are earned when a person passes a competency test certifying he or she has the skills necessary to succeed in a certain profession. Think of computer network specialists, welders, medical records technicians, pharmacy technicians, industrial machinery mechanics, and manufacturing technicians. Additionally, employability skills, design thinking, computational thinking and coding can help adults upgrade their credentials while they work. All of these skills can be developed through the online college platform. With the high cost of living, many Californians are working multiple jobs to feed their families.

Californians need an easier way to become better trained, highly skilled workers -- for their economic wellbeing and that of our state. The online plan can finally give these underserved workers a path to success.

Thank you, and I urge the Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review to support the Governor's Online College Plan.

Regards,

Jose Fierro, D.V.M., Ph.D.
President/Superintendent