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May 1, 2018

To: The Honorable Philip Y. Ting
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee

Honorable Members
Assembly Budget Committee

From: Frank J. Mecca, Executive Director

**RE: SUPPORT FOR GOVERNOR BROWN'S ONLINE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROPOSAL**

The County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) supports Governor Brown's proposal for a "115th community college" - a fully online campus that will deliver skills and industry-valued credentials that will help working adults advance their careers and improve their economic future.

It is estimated that more than 2.5 million working Californians aged 25 to 34 - of whom 49 percent are Latino, 31 percent white, 9 percent Asian and 7 percent African American - are currently unable to access the educational pathways needed for economic mobility. Many are primary household wage earners, who work full-time jobs, care for family, and are unable to attend classes at a brick-and-mortar campus during a traditional academic year.

The population counties serve through our human services agencies, especially those participating in the CalWORKs Welfare to Work program, would greatly benefit from this proposal. Many of our participants seek additional educational opportunities as part of their journey to self-sufficiency, but they often face barriers to attending traditional educational institutions. These barriers may be geographic for some - lack of proximity to a college campus, for example; for others, the barrier is time - an inability to attend classes during the hours in which they are regularly offered due to a job or family commitments.

We have been in discussions with the Administration regarding the ancillary costs for CalWORKs participants to take courses on-line as part of their Welfare-to-Work plans. We appreciate the Administration's willingness to work with us to ensure those costs are built into the proposal, to ensure access for CalWORKs participants to this new resource.

The 115th community college concept will address an urgent, unmet need by providing a flexible and affordable learning option for workers to earn short-term certificates and

credentials needed for higher wages and job promotion.

With the sixth largest economy in the world, it is imperative that California invest in educating and training more adults in the skills needed to succeed now and in the future. Our success depends on a well-educated workforce, and this proposal puts California on a path toward greater prosperity.

We encourage you to embrace the 115th community college so that more workers in your districts, including parents participating in the CalWORKs Welfare to Work program, can access the opportunity to improve their economic futures.

- cc: Misty Feusahrens, Office of the Assembly Speaker
- Monica Henestroza, Office of the Assembly Speaker
- Jason Sisney, Office of the Assembly Speaker
- Mark Martin, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2
- Cyndi Hillery, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office
- Katie Sperla, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office
- Irene Ho, Office of Assembly Member Joaquin Arambula
- Jennifer Kuhn, Legislative Analysts' Office
- Edgar Cabral, Legislative Analyst's Office
- Tom Torlakson, California Department of Education
- Christian Osmena, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
- Karen Zamarripa, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
- Will Lightbourne, California Department of Social Services
- Robert Smith, California Department of Social Services
- Todd Bland, California Department of Social Services
- Jeff Bell, Education, Department of Finance
- Chris Ferguson, Education, Department of Finance
- Maritza Urquiza, Education, Department of Finance
- Kristin Shelton, HHS, Department of Finance
- Yang Lee, HHS, Department of Finance
- Justin Garrett, California Association of Counties
- County Caucus