



CWDA
Advancing Human Services
for the Welfare of *All* Californians

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May 1, 2018

To: The Honorable Holly J. Mitchell
Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee

Honorable Members
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review 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: Jennifer Troia, Office of the Senate pro Tempore
Mareva Brown, Office of the Senate pro Tempore
Christopher Woods, Office of the Senate pro Tempore
Anita Lee, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 1
Kirk Feely, Senate Republican Fiscal Office
Cheryl Black, Senate Republican Fiscal Office
Tiffani Alvidrez, Office of Senator Holly J. Mitchell
Jennifer Kuhn, Legislative Analysts' Office
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Tom Torlakson, California Department of Education
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