

2001 Gateway, Suite 101E
San Jose, CA 95110
PH | 408.501.7864
@REAL_Coalition



LUCY DUNN
Co-Chair
Orange County Business Council

CARL GUARDINO
Co-Chair
Silicon Valley Leadership Group

RON ADDINGTON
Business Council of San Joaquin County

BILL ALLEN
Los Angeles County Economic
Development Corporation

MARK CAFFERTY
San Diego Regional Economic
Development Corporation

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East Bay Leadership Council

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Commerce

PAUL GRANILLO
Inland Empire Economic Partnership

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Joint Venture Silicon Valley

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San Gabriel Valley
Economic Partnership

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Oakland Metropolitan Chamber of
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San Francisco Chamber of Commerce

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East Bay Economic Development
Alliance

MATTHEW MAHOOD
San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of
Commerce

CYNTHIA MURRAY
North Bay Leadership Council

JONATHAN COE
Santa Rose Chamber of Commerce

JERRY SANDERS
San Diego Regional Chamber of
Commerce

AL SMITH
Greater Fresno Area Chamber
of Commerce

PETER TATEISHI
Sacramento Metro Chamber of
Commerce

GARY TOEBBEN
Los Angeles Area Chamber of
Commerce

JIM WUNDERMAN
Bay Area Council

April 4, 2016

Senator Mark Leno
Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
State Capitol, Room 5100
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assembly Member Phil Ting
Chair, Assembly Committee on Budget
State Capitol, P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249

Dear Senator Leno and Assembly Member Ting:

On behalf of the Regional Economic Association Leaders (R.E.A.L.) Coalition, an association of California's most influential business and economic development entities, representing 22 member organizations and more than 15,000 employers who collectively provide more than 3.9 million California jobs, we write to support the full funding of \$200 million for the Strong Workforce Program as well as the \$48 million annual commitment to the Career Technical Education Pathways Program outlined in the proposed Budget Act of 2016.

The Coalition supports increased investment in career technical education (CTE) programs, and recommends that the state allocate these funds across regional economies and industry clusters, instead of diffusing them among all community colleges. Our state's goal should be to connect more workers with well-paying jobs by promoting collaboration between employers and regions' vast network of workforce training programs, from K-12 schools and community colleges to workforce investment boards and community-based organizations.

As your Committees considers career technical education proposals in the Budget Act of 2016, the Coalition believes two investments, in particular, are of critical importance. With \$200 million in funding, the new Strong Workforce Program outlined in the budget will allow community colleges to expand access to career technical education courses and programs, while evolving regional coordination as recommended by the Task Force. This program will be strengthened by the budget's \$48 million investment in the Career Technical Education Pathways Program, an existing program that has already begun to increase collaboration between K-12 schools and community colleges.

The views expressed in this correspondence are supported by the signatories. R.E.A.L. Coalition partners not included as signatories are not necessarily party to the views expressed herein.

As the Committee considers trailer bill language for these programs, the Coalition believes these important principles should serve as the foundation for investments in career technical education. Programs should:

- Nurture the regional coordination amongst colleges that has is already expanding under the guidance of the regional consortia created by Doing What MATTERS for Jobs and Economy.
- Streamline course and curriculum approval both at the state and local levels—and consider eliminating the state process for career technical education. Industry must be engaged early and often to ensure career technical education curricula remain relevant. Curriculum portability is also vital, and when one region’s faculty and its employers approve a curriculum model, the same model should be considered approved for us by all other interested community colleges.
- Eliminate barriers to hiring qualified career technical education instructors, including re-evaluating the required minimum qualification.
- Establish priorities for the use of the regional fund:
 1. CTE to meet needs of priority and emerging industry sectors
 2. CTE with labor market need and proven “student success with labor market outcomes”
 3. CTE with labor market need and that meets a societal need
 4. CTE with labor market need that completes a structured pathway, either from secondary to post-secondary or adult education to post-secondary.

We look forward to working together in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

(over)



Carl Guardino
President & CEO
Silicon Valley Leadership Group



Lucy Dunn
President & CEO
Orange County Business Council



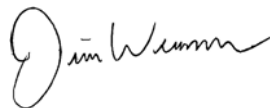
Russell Hancock
President & CEO
Joint Venture Silicon Valley



Paul Granillo
President & CEO
Inland Empire Economic Partnership



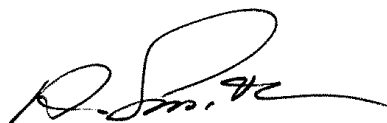
Cynthia Murray
President & CEO
North Bay Leadership Council



Jim Wunderman
President & CEO
Bay Area Council



Barbara Leslie
President & CEO
Oakland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce



Al Smith
President & CEO
Greater Fresno Area Chamber of Commerce



Marc Cafferty
President & CEO
San Diego Regional Economic Development
Corporation



Darien Louie
President & CEO
East Bay Economic Development Agency



Jerry Sanders
President & CEO
San Diego Chamber of Commerce



Matthew R. Mahood
President & CEO
San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce



Randy Gordon
President & CEO
Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce



Ron Addington
President & CEO
Business Council of San Joaquin County



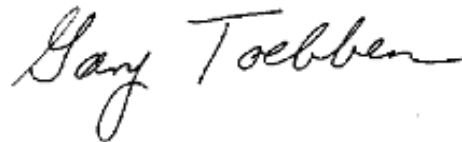
Bill Allen
President & CEO
Los Angeles County Economic Development
Corporation



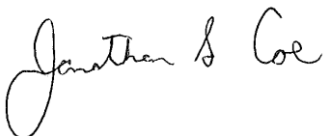
Mike Shay
Interim CEO
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership



Kristin Connolly
President & CEO
East Bay Leadership Council



Gary Toebben
President & CEO
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Jonathan Coe
President & CEO
Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce