

Kristen F. Soares  
PRESIDENT



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William Jessup University  
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April 3, 2017

The Honorable Jose Medina  
Chair, Assembly Higher Education Committee  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 2141  
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: *Assembly Bill 1166 (Burke): The College Opportunity Act  
Request for Support*

Dear Assembly Member Medina:

I am writing on behalf of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) to request your support for Assembly Bill 1166 (Burke). This bill would re-establish a statutory formula for Cal Grant awards for students from low-income families that attend private, nonprofit colleges and universities.

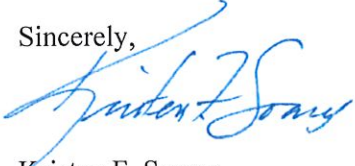
The state has long recognized the role of private, nonprofit institutions in meeting the state's goals via the Master Plan for Higher Education. As a result, the Independent Sector annually enrolls over 332,000 undergraduate and graduate students, producing 22% of all undergraduates and 55% of graduate professionals into the workforce each year. Across the state, the sector serves an incredibly diverse student body, with 65% of our Cal Grant students being Latino, Asian American, or African American, and 45% are the first in their family to attend college. We also graduate 63% of our Cal Grant students in four years.

Prior to 2000, the state gave students attending private, nonprofit institutions the ability to anticipate and plan year to year for their college costs, with a statutory formula similar to the one proposed in AB 1166. When the Cal Grant program became an entitlement program, the formula was rescinded, with the expectation that it would continue to be adjusted to ensure affordable access to students attending independent institutions. Now as the state begins to reinvest in higher education funding, we urge you to ensure that our students' cuts are also addressed in their Cal Grant award levels.

AB 1166 restores the state's commitment to all California students and requires a minimal investment for our students. In fact, a recent Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) report recommends a formula for students who choose the private, nonprofit sector. The cost of Cal Grant students attending our institutions is a fraction of the state's costs for those choosing to attend either the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU). *Students attending our institutions receive an average Cal Grant award of \$8,550 per year as compared to the state per student cost of \$27,600 and \$14,200, respectively at UC and CSU.*

California's higher education system is the envy of the world; it is a system that recognizes the role of public and private institutions. It is in our common interest to support *all* our colleges and universities for students and our future. As such, we believe that investments in our public colleges and universities should remain a priority; we also request that the same be true for students to access private, nonprofit institutions. AB 1166 makes this commitment and we urge your support to protect college access for all.

Sincerely,



Kristen F. Soares  
President

cc: Assembly Member Autumn Burke  
Members, California State Assembly Higher Education Committee  
Karen Teel, Committee Secretary, Assembly Higher Education Committee  
Katie Sperla, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus