



What Others are Saying About AB 1456: Cal Grant Modernization Equity Framework

Authors: Assembly Members Jose Medina and Kevin McCarty

Principal Coauthor: Senator Connie Leyva

“AB 1456 is an important step towards modernizing and simplifying CA’s financial aid system – a system that currently leaves too many students behind. This legislation will make thousands more Californians eligible for the aid they need to earn their degree. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented hardship across our state and further revealed many of the inequities in our society. As we emerge from this crisis it is critical we invest in access to higher education and give all Californians the chance for a brighter, more prosperous future.”

Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis

“For too long, California’s financial aid system has excluded too many students. In the midst of a pandemic that has exacerbated socioeconomic inequalities, it is critical that we modernize and reform Cal Grant’s framework to reflect the needs and students of the 21st century. AB 1456 will introduce a new path for college affordability in California.”

Assemblymember Jose Medina (D-Riverside)

“Cal Grant modernization is desperately needed. AB 1456 will put forth a new financial aid framework aimed to address inequities caused by COVID-19 and put student needs at the center of all college affordability discussions.”

Assemblymember Kevin McCarty (D-Sacramento)

“As principal coauthor of AB 1456, I firmly believe that California must expand access to financial aid in order for our students to be successful. By modernizing Cal Grants under this measure, we will establish an approach to state financial aid that reflects the evolving needs of today’s students.”

Senator Connie M. Leyva (D-Chino)

“As a community college leader and Student Aid Commissioner, I am thrilled to see this proposal introduced to bring greater equity to the Cal Grant. AB 1456 would expand eligibility to Cal Grant aid for thousands of California students at a time when we know that COVID-19 has only exacerbated their financial challenges. I am grateful to Assemblymembers Jose Medina and Kevin McCarty, as well as Senator Connie Leyva, for working with the Commission to advance this proposal to simplify and expand state financial aid for students.”

Dr. Jamillah Moore

Cañada College President & Vice Chair of the California Student Aid Commission

“Students have worked too hard to see their college dreams shattered by the pandemic. By simplifying eligibility and prioritizing students the greatest economic need, AB 1456 takes critical steps towards creating a more equitable financial aid system for California’s diverse student population.”

Guillermo Mayer

Student Aid Commissioner

“COVID-19 has exacerbated the barriers to college affordability facing low-income, Black, Latinx and first-generation college-goers. That’s why AB 1456 and the new Cal Grant Equity Framework is urgently needed. We need a Cal Grant program that prioritizes our lowest-income students, recognizes that the cost of college is more than just tuition, and that treats student equitably regardless of when or where they attend college. A college degree is still the best insurance policy against unemployment and poverty and degree holders provide the state with an incredible return on investment. The time is now to equitize Cal Grant to ensure thousands more students have the aid they need to go to college and graduate; our residents and economy are counting on us.”

Audrey Dow

Senior Vice President, Campaign for College Opportunity

“It’s good to see California’s leaders looking to modernize the state’s financial aid system. If done right, this proposal will provide much-needed support for students of color and students from lower-income communities, many of whom have also been hardest hit by the pandemic. In order to truly modernize the Cal Grant, the Legislature must also work to guarantee that, as the pool of eligible community college students grows, the award amount, at minimum, retains its current value and grows meaningfully over time as non-tuition costs increase. Our hope is that doing so will set up students for success by fundamentally changing how they can access and utilize financial aid.”

Dr. Christopher J. Nellum

Deputy Director of Research and Policy at the Education Trust–West

“The Cal Grant Modernization proposal is a huge step towards supporting today’s college students and the current realities that they face. There are more costs to college than just tuition and by creating a needs based and more inclusive financial aid system, California will be making investments that will provide important assistance to students of color, parent students, and first generation college students.”

Samantha Seng

Policy Advisor at NextGen California

“California cannot afford to leave our students behind due to the pandemic. Our business community depends on a strong pipeline of college students to help our economy recover, and AB 1456 supports that pipeline.”

David Rattray

President and CEO of UNITE-LA

"While the pandemic has exacerbated the deep inequities in our financial aid systems and pushed already vulnerable students even further into uncertainty, those inequities are not new, and the need to reform our financial aid systems have long been felt and voiced by students. We need to modernize the Cal Grant not only to build a strong infrastructure for California's recovery from the pandemic, but to also invest in the generations of students that will forge the future of our state and country. That's why UC students are proud to stand behind AB 1456."

Josh Lewis

Government Relations Chair, UC Student Association

"Although nearly half of community college students meet the low income standard to receive a system tuition and fee waiver, only 5% receive a Cal Grant. Under the existing Cal Grant structure, countless students are left out of the program. Students need Cal Grant Modernization to increase access to higher education."

Stephen Kodur

President, Student Senate for California Community Colleges

As of February 23, 2021