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California Student Aid Commission Statement on AB 1540

Sacramento, Calif., October 9, 2023 – Earlier today/Yesterday, the Commission was thrilled to see the signing of **Assembly Bill 1540 (Mike Fong)** by Governor Newsom. AB 1540, by Assemblymember Mike Fong, will streamline the financial aid process for California Dream Act applicants.

“I am proud to co-sponsor AB 1540, which will improve the accessibility of our higher education institutions by knocking down barriers standing between undocumented students and their financial aid,” said **Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis**. “I want to thank Assemblymember Mike Fong for championing this critical piece of legislation and the California Student Aid Commission for their tireless dedication to making the California dream a reality for more Californians.”

While California has been a leader in providing undocumented students with the tools to attend postsecondary institutions, barriers continue to persist. Currently, students must fill out the California Dream Act Application (CADAA) to determine their financial aid eligibility, and then submit an AB 540 Affidavit with their college or university to verify their residency status and be given a nonresident tuition exemption. This process varies by campus, often leads to a convoluted and complex process that can result in financial aid being delayed, or even denied. AB 1540 clears these administrative barriers by integrating the AB 540 affidavit into the California Dream Act Application, allowing students to submit one application to determine their financial aid eligibility. The Commission will provide the institution of higher education with the affidavit, removing administrative barriers for students and ensuring there is no miscommunication or confusion for students.

“AB 1540 is a critical policy that will help close educational equity gaps and streamline the California Dream Act Application to make financial aid available to some of our most vulnerable students,” said **Marlene Garcia**,

Executive Director of the California Student Aid Commission. “We applaud Governor Newsom for signing this bill and thank the Legislature for their continued support to our students.”

The Commission is excited to work with the higher education systems in California to begin the synthesis of the CADAA and AB 540 Affidavit, so it will be ready students when financial aid applications open later this year. The Commission is also grateful to Assemblymember Mike Fong for his work and leadership to better serve students and to Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis for her support and dedication to students.