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A new bill could take Cal Grant a GIANT step forward

Sacramento, CA (2019) — The California Student Aid Commission (Commission) recognizes the leadership of Assemblymember Jose Medina and Assemblymember Kevin McCarty for their efforts to revolutionize the Cal Grant program. AB 1314 (Medina, McCarty) is consistent with the Commissions guiding principles adopted last fall to be the foundation of Cal Grant reform.

The Commission, through its Cal Grant program, awards nearly 470,000 students each year with financial aid allowing them to attend higher education institutions. The proposed legislation will increase that number by expanding age limits of those receiving Cal Grants; and reducing other barriers such as the amount of time a student may be out of high school or having a specific grade point average. AB 1314 will also seek to consolidate and simplify the Cal Grant programs -- Cal Grant A, B, and C -- and middle class scholarship. The goal of the new legislation is to convert the existing Cal Grant system to a single, easy-to-understand state grant program.

The Commission's guiding principles of Cal Grant reform include ensuring equity, affordability, and a student-centered state financial aid system. AB 1314 will increase equity by removing age requirements, providing greater resources based on rising cost for current California students, and developing a student focused financial aid system by which the Commission and lawmakers put student seeking higher education first.

The foundation of the Commission's guiding principles include: removing or reducing eligibility barriers to the current Cal Grant program; adopting an award model focused on the total cost of attendance (COA), rather than largely focused on tuition and fees, and increasing affordability for students attending private nonprofit institutions, as well as public colleges and universities; expanding access to students wishing to utilize financial aid awards for summer coursework in order to graduate in a more timely manner.

"It is time to reform Cal Grant. Seeing Californians left out by their age, income, and the amount of time it takes to complete a degree or certificate must end. The time is now to act -- it is essential that we keep the student at the center of this comprehensive reform," said Commission Vice-Chair Catalina Cifuentes.

The total COA is at the center of this referendum. The rising cost of college attendance, California's mounting housing cost, and food insecurities affects the learning outcomes of the students in California higher education institutions. AB 1314 reinforces the Commissions guiding pillars of Cal Grant reform and seeks to bring additional resources to the students who receive the coveted Cal Grant.

The Commission is the state's policy leader and hero for the California higher education student. The Commission's goal with Cal Grant reform is to develop meaningful legislation that seeks to end the hardships a student faces when Cal Grant isn't enough. The continued mission of the Commission is to make education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians. AB 1314 will help to make that accessibility a reality.

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The California Student Aid Commission is the state's policy leader in the administration of financial aid for higher education, making education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians. California Student Aid Commission serves the needs of not only today's college students but tomorrow's students, guiding them through the application process. Information and tools are available online for the parents of tomorrow's college and career technical students, a fully staffed call center answers questions and the California Student Aid Commission provides workshops and funds grants to organizations that provide access opportunities for students who are first in their family to attend institutions of higher education. For more information on how the California Student Aid Commission serves to educate, inform, and support students, their educational institutions, and the professionals who assist them please visit our website at <https://www.csac.ca.gov> or follow us on [Twitter](#) @castudentaid.