DATE

The Honorable Connie Leyva, Chair

Senate Education Committee

State Capitol Room 4061

Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 874 (Hill) Community College Districts: Statewide Baccalaureate Degree Pilot Program

**Position: Support**

Dear Chair Leyva:

On behalf of theXXXXX Community College District, I am writing to request your support for SB 874 (Hill). This bill would make permanent the current fifteen community college baccalaureate degree programs. The bill would also authorize an expansion of that program to authorize additional districts and colleges to apply to the State Chancellor’s Office of the California Community Colleges for approval of additional baccalaureate degree programs. SB 874 would continue to prohibit the duplication of programs at both the University of California and the California State University.

In recent years many, including the Public Policy Institute of California, have identified the need for over one million bachelor’s degree holders in California in the coming decade, especially in workforce fields. The PPIC found that to keep up with the demand for a college-educated workforce the state would need to increase the number of bachelor’s degrees awarded by 40%. In 2014, in order to help address this shortfall, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed SB 850 authorizing up to fifteen community college districts to offer baccalaureate degrees so long as they did not duplicate programs already offered at UC and CSU. Those programs have proven to be very successful serving a diverse population, an older population and, at times, a population that may not otherwise have access to a baccalaureate degree program.

Currently, over twenty states already offer bachelor’s degrees at the community college level in select workforce fields to better accommodate labor needs. Access, affordability, and high quality characterize these community college programs, and research shows that the state and local economies have benefited from this adjustment. Most recently, the Legislative Analyst report recognized much of the good work that current community college baccalaureate degree programs are undertaking.

A statewide survey of the graduates of these programs found that 75% of graduates were first-generation college students, received FAFSA, struggled financially, experienced homelessness or housing insecurity, indicated a disability, or served in the military. 83% of graduates were employed within 3 months of completing their degree, with over 90% employed in the same field of study, and in the state of California. The median income for this group was $65,000, with a median income gain of $16,500. 82% of graduates feel that the applied bachelor’s degree has prepared them well for their employment, with 87% stating that the value of the applied bachelor’s program was worth tuition.

(FEEL FREE TO ADD SPECIFIC DISTRICT/COLLEGE INFORMATION HERE )

This bill would further allow the state to advance the needs of the workforce by authorizing additional community college baccalaureate degree programs. For many professions, the baccalaureate degree has become the standard for entry into the workforce. This measure would increase access to baccalaureate degree programs while also increasing the earning power of graduates.

SB 874 also addresses some of the issues raised by the recent LAO report. The bill continues oversight by the State Chancellor office, requires greater workforce input, as well as greater collaboration with CSU and UC.

This is an important workforce measure that will provide community colleges with the means to address the state’s need for an educated workforce, and is supported by many key stakeholders, including the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges.

For these reasons we respectfully urge your support for SB 874 (Hill).

Sincerely,

NAME
TITLE

Cc: Members, Senate Education Committee