



California  
Community  
Colleges

May XX, 2020

The Honorable Shirley Weber  
State Capitol, Room 3123  
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: Assembly Constitutional Amendment 5 (Weber)  
**Position: Support**

Dear Assembly Member Weber:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to express our position of strong support for your bill, Assembly Constitutional Amendment 5. This constitutional amendment, if approved by voters, would repeal Proposition 209 (1996), which prohibited California state and local governments from utilizing race-conscious policies and other forms of affirmative action to remedy the effects of past discrimination in the areas of public employment, public education, or public contracting.

California Community Colleges are the largest provider of workforce education and transfer preparation in the nation. The vast majority of California's students—including first-generation college students, low-income students, and students of color—will begin their higher education journey at one of the 115 California Community Colleges. As open-access institutions, located in nearly every community in the state and serving a combined 2.1 million students annually, the California Community Colleges represent the best opportunity to meet the needs of students and the economy.

Our system has much to be proud of in terms of access and opportunities provided to students, but challenges around low completion rates and persistent achievement gaps remain. According to California Competes, the state is projected to face a degree and credential shortfall of 2.4 million by 2025. Closing this gap requires community colleges both serve more, non-traditional students and ensure those students successfully complete credential and degree goals aligned to the state's workforce needs. The economic impacts of COVID-19 make reaching these goals even more critically important. Our system must continue to serve the state's most vulnerable and neediest populations and lead the upskilling and reemployment needs of the millions of Californians displaced by the public health crisis.

While the Chancellor's Office can provide system-level leadership and put in place the major planks of reform, the hard work of transforming colleges must be performed by the more than 90,000 faculty and staff who work on college campuses. However, there is a significant mismatch between the diversity of the faculty population and the diversity of the student body. Within the community colleges, 73 percent of students are students of color, immigrants, or both, yet the majority of college faculty and staff are white. Shifting this imbalance—combined with effective professional development for all college personnel—can create more inclusive college environments and more equitable opportunities for underserved student populations.

In November 2018, the Board of Governors requested that the Chancellor's Office establish a Faculty and Staff Diversity Taskforce (Task Force). The creation of the Task Force was sparked by a statewide study by the Campaign for College Opportunity which found that college faculty and especially leadership were significantly less diverse than the student population of the colleges. After extensive research, input-gathering, and deliberation, the Task Force presented a set of statewide recommendations on structural changes, including policies, practices, and tools to improve the recruitment and hiring of a diverse community college workforce.

The repeal of Proposition 209 will allow for more diverse faculty applicant pools and strengthen the system's commitment in implementing inclusive and equitable policies, procedures, and hiring practices, as recommended by the Task Force. Diversifying the faculty and staff is a core strategy for shifting the culture of colleges toward a mindset of success for all students and moving the needle on student completion and closing educational attainments gaps. Empirical studies have repeatedly suggested that a diverse faculty produces students who are better educated and better prepared for leadership, citizenship, and professional competitiveness. Therefore, ACA 5 complements the existing and ongoing efforts of the Chancellor's Office, Academic Senate, and other stakeholders to diversify community college faculty and staff.

The California Community Colleges and our partners thank you for your leadership on this vitally important issue. If you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact David O'Brien, Vice Chancellor for Governmental Relations at the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, at [dobrien@cccco.edu](mailto:dobrien@cccco.edu) or (650) 704-9477.

Sincerely,