



April 22, 2021

The Honorable Jose Medina
 Chair, Assembly Committee on Higher Education
 Legislative Office Building, 1020 N Street, Room 173
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 927 (Medina): Public postsecondary education: community colleges: statewide baccalaureate degree program – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Medina:

On behalf of the above business organizations in the Inland Empire, we write to express our support for your bill AB 927, which would extend indefinitely the program that allows community colleges to offer a statewide baccalaureate degree and increase the number of allowable community college district programs from 15 to 30.

Community colleges account for more than half of undergraduate enrollment in California—open access, wide geographic distribution, and relatively low fees make them especially popular. However, the educational requirements for entry-level work have increasingly included baccalaureate degrees.

If current trends persist, 38 percent of jobs will require at least a bachelor’s degree by 2030. But population and education trends suggest that only 33 percent of working-age adults in California will have bachelor’s degrees by 2030—a shortfall of 1.1 million college graduates.

The current programs in the community college baccalaureate pilot are affordable and diverse. Students participating in the programs pay approximately \$10,560 on average for their four-year degrees. For many of the programs offered through the community college baccalaureate degree program, the only other opportunity that students have are private colleges that could cost \$40,000 to \$60,000 annually. Additionally, over half of student participants are from underserved ethnic groups and the vast majority are women.

There is a clear need and desire for more districts and students to participate in an expanded pilot program. However, the current restrictions on the number of colleges that offer baccalaureates have limited expansion. Moreover, the pilot sunsets on July 1, 2026, requiring additional legislation to extend the program. AB 927 is a practical solution to eliminating the skills gap and enabling underserved students to attain baccalaureate degrees to compete in California’s current and future economy.

For these reasons and others, we are pleased to express our support for AB 927. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our position in greater detail, please contact Luis Portillo at 909-944-2201 or by email at lportillo@ieep.com. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Bette Rader Beaumont Chamber of Commerce	Ellen Clarke Big Bear Chamber of Commerce	Zeb Welborn Chino Valley Chamber of Commerce
Bobby Spiegel Corona Chamber of Commerce	Joshua Bonner Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce	Mark Creffield Greater High Desert Chamber of Commerce
Peggi Hazlett Greater Ontario Business Council	Cyndi Lemke Hemet San Jacinto Chamber of Commerce	Chris Nielsen Highland Chamber of Commerce
Paul Granillo Inland Empire Economic Partnership	Maneesha Jones Menifee Valley Chamber of Commerce	Oscar Valdepeña Moreno Valley Chamber of Commerce

Patrick Ellis Murrieta/Wildomar Chamber of Commerce	Ignacio Valdivia Perris Valley Chamber of Commerce	Monique Manzanares Pomona Chamber of Commerce
Robert Hufnagel Rancho Cucamonga Chamber of Commerce	John Mills Redlands Chamber of Commerce	Emily Falappino Temecula Valley Chamber of Commerce
Peggy Robertson Upland Chamber of Commerce		