

May 27, 2020

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Assemblymember Shirley Weber
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249

Re: Letter of Support: Assembly Constitutional Amendment 5 (Weber, as of 25 May 2020)

Dear Assemblymember Weber:

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges wishes to express our position of support for Assembly Constitutional Amendment 5 (Weber, as of 25 May 2020), which, if approved by voters, would repeal Proposition 209 (1996). Proposition 209 (1996) prohibited California state and local governments "from discriminating against, or granting preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting."

The California Community Colleges system is the largest system of public higher education in the United States, providing transfer preparation, career technical education, and other educational services and pathways. The open access mission of the California Community Colleges, combined with the location of colleges in almost every area of the state, means that the majority of students in California who seek a higher education pass through the doors of the community college system. The 114 accredited California community colleges serve over 2.1 million students annually, students that are reflective of California as a whole: first generation students, minoritized students, undocumented students, and students from low incomes.

When Proposition 209 was initially proposed and then passed in 1996, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges responded immediately. A series of resolutions, passed beginning in 1997, called a variety of actions by the ASCCC; these actions included the ASCCC working with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to hold trainings around diversity, the ASCCC reaffirming its position on affirmative action, and the ASCCC creating an award recognizing the colleges' efforts around diversity. That award, the Regina Stanback-Stroud award, was first awarded in 2000 and continues to be awarded to "an individual or group that is exceptional in contributing to the advancement of intercultural harmony, equity, and campus diversity at their college."^a

Given this long-held position of supporting and encouraging diversity in the community colleges, in November 2018 the ASCCC partnered with the Chancellor's Office to co-chair the Board of Governors' Faculty and Staff Diversity Taskforce. Led by ASCCC President John Stankas and Deputy Chancellor Daisy Gonzales, the taskforce worked with a group of stakeholders to research and gather input, and in September 2019 it presented a set of statewide recommendations on structural changes including policies,

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practices, and tools to improve the recruitment and hiring of a diverse California community college workforce. In November 2019, the delegates attending the ASCCC Fall Plenary Session adopted a new inclusion statement in line with the Board of Governors' statement, and the ASCCC continues to work with the Board and the Chancellor's Office to champion diversity, equity, and inclusion at the colleges and throughout the system. Diversifying the faculty and staff is essential to retaining and encouraging a diverse student body such as exists in the California Community College system. ACA 5 (Weber, as of 25 May 2020), by repealing Proposition 209, will allow the work of the Task Force as well as the Academic Senate's work around diversity to continue and to expand, and will assist the ASCCC's ongoing efforts to diversify community college faculty and staff.

For these reasons, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges supports Assembly Constitutional Amendment 5 (Weber, as of 25 May 2020). Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Respectfully,



John Stankas, President

Cc: Lande Ajose, Senior Policy Advisor for Higher Education
Joey Freeman, Chief Deputy Legislative Affairs Secretary for Policy
Speaker of the Assembly Anthony Rendon
Monica Henestroza, Special Assistant to Assemblymember Rendon
Senate President Pro Tempore Toni Atkins
Megan Baier, Educational Consultant, Senator Atkins
Jeanice Warden, Chief Consultant, Assembly Committee on Higher Education
Olgalilia Ramirez, Consultant, Senate Committee on Education
Anita Lee, Consultant, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Mark Martin, Consultant for the Budget Committee on Higher Education
Eloy Ortiz Oakley, Chancellor, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
Daisy Gonzales, Deputy Chancellor, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
Lizette Navarette, Vice Chancellor for College Finance & Facilities Planning, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
David O'Brien, Vice Chancellor for Government Relations, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
Tom Epstein, President, California Community Colleges Board of Governors
Pamela Haynes, Vice President, California Community Colleges Board of Governors

^a <https://asccc.org/events/stanback-stroud-diversity-award-0>