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May 5, 2023

The Honorable Blanca Pacheco
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Room 6240
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: AB 817 Open meetings: teleconferencing: subsidiary body. — SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Pacheco:

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) is pleased to **SUPPORT** AB 817 (as of April 14, 2023), which would allow a subsidiary body of a local agency to use teleconferencing for its meetings without posting agendas at each teleconference location, identifying each teleconference location in the notice and agenda, making each teleconference location accessible to the public, and requiring at least a quorum of the subsidiary body to participate from within the local agency's jurisdiction, subject to certain conditions.

Modifications to the Brown Act made during the COVID-19 pandemic through Governor Newsom's executive orders and declared state of emergency resulted in many colleges seeing an increase in access to and engagement in local academic senate meetings by faculty who serve as senators or as members of the general public.

While the ASCCC recognizes the importance of conducting meetings with transparency and providing open access to the public for publicly funded works, leaders of local academic senates, curriculum committees, and their various subcommittees, all legislative bodies per the Brown Act, are seeking the means to retain the engagement levels experienced during the pandemic while complying with the spirit of the law. We believe that creating greater access and participation is fundamental to the Brown Act and encourage the Legislature to explore all available avenues to enact changes to open meeting policies that allow engagement via teleconference in ways similar to what was allowable during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges offers its **SUPPORT** of AB 817 (as of April 14, 2023) and thanks your office for putting forth this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Ginni May, President