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March 31, 2015

Senator Block  
California State Capitol, Room 4072  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 15 (Block): Postsecondary Education Financial Aid: Graduation Incentive Grant Program**  
**AAPCA POSITION: SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Block,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California, representing the 5,000 board-certified pediatrician members of all four California AAP regional chapters statewide (Ch 1 – Northern California, Ch 2 – Greater Los Angeles, Ch 3 – San Diego, and Ch 4 – Orange County), strongly supports your proposed legislation SB 15 (Block). This bill would establish, commencing with the 2015-16 academic year, the Graduation Incentive Grant program to provide eligible matriculating undergraduate students of California State University with financial need attending a campus of the California State University with financial aid for up to 3 college years, as specified.

During the Great Recession, the California was limited in its ability to develop and invest in policies that support students attending CA Community Colleges, the CSU, and the UC. Consequently, the cost of attending CSU and UC has more than doubled between 2004 and 2013, reaching unprecedented levels.

While it is important to maintain a commitment to keep college affordable and accessible, it is necessary to develop policies that incentivize students to finish college in four years. If a student completes his or her degree in four years, it is likely he or she will incur less education costs (including debt) and will contribute to the state's economy faster. Recent research estimates that for every additional year of enrollment in college the total cost of education for the student increases by \$26,000.

SB 15 creates an additional 7,500 competitive Cal Grant Awards for non-traditional students, rejects an 11% cut to Cal Grants for students attending non-profit colleges, and establishes a graduation incentive program for CSU students to help them graduate in four years.

SB 15 also states the intent of the legislature to eliminate the UC's 5% annual tuition increase over the next five years, and to provide additional funding to increase course offerings and support services to help students graduate on time.

Pediatricians strongly support SB 15 and thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of children across California.

Sincerely,

*Kris E. Calvin* |

Kris Calvin  
Chief Executive Officer  
American Academy of Pediatrics, California