

March 25, 2019

Senator Connie Leyva
Chair, Senate Committee on Education State Capitol
State Capitol, Room 2083
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 296 (Allen) Student Financial Aid: Immigrant Seeking Asylum
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Senator Leyva:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 5,000 California pediatricians strongly supports proposed legislation SB 296 (Allen) to make a noncitizen student who has met certain specified requirements eligible for state financial aid through the Cal Grant program while their asylum application is being reviewed.

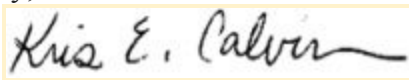
The number of individuals fleeing persecution and applying for asylum in California has increased dramatically. Among these applicants are prospective and current college students wishing to attend a university in California, but who are unable to do so because of the significant costs. According to the Georgetown Public Policy Institute, 65% of jobs will require some post-secondary education by 2020. Because of their unique status as pending asylees, these students are not eligible for Cal Grant financial aid if they have been here in the state for less than three years, hurting their chances of finding meaningful employment.

SB 296 (Allen) would allow pending asylum seekers in California who possess an employment authorization document and a social security number to be eligible for the Cal Grant Program. The bill ensures that those who are escaping persecution and seeking another opportunity in life also have the ability to continue their education and become productive members of the communities in which they live.

Pediatricians across the state support SB 296 (Allen) and urge you to vote AYE.

Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of the children, youth, and families of California.

Sincerely,



Kris Calvin, Chief Executive Officer
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

Cc: AAP-CA Leadership; The Honorable Ben Allen