

March 31, 2021

The Honorable Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer, Jr.
State Capitol P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0059

RE: AB-295 (Jones-Sawyer) Postsecondary education: pilot program for free tuition and fees: working group
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Jones-Sawyer,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 3,000 pediatrician members strongly supports AB 295, as introduced on January 21, 2021, which would establish a working group to discuss the creation of a pilot program to provide free post-secondary education in California.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, people with some form of higher education earn more and have a lower probability of unemployment.¹ The more educated our population, the more prosperous our population is. Access to a college education can help break the cycle of poverty for a family.²

Costs to attend University of California and California State Universities, however, have increased dramatically making it difficult for students to both attend school and meet basic needs. Many students on California's college campuses experience food insecurity and hunger. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated these issues for students. Basic needs insecurity is particularly dire for students of color.³

AB 295 would establish a working group with representatives from the State Department of Education, Board of Governors of California Community Colleges, the Trustees of California State University, and the Regents of the University of California to develop a pilot program to provide free postsecondary education to everyone in the state, removing barriers that could help break the cycle of poverty.

AAP-CA strongly supports AB 295. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,



Nancy Graff, MD FAAP
Member, State Government Affairs Committee
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP Leadership

¹ <https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2018/data-on-display/education-pays.htm>

² <https://www.educationandcarenews.com/college-affordability/breaking-the-cycle-of-poverty-through-greater-access-to-higher-ed/>

³ <https://hope4college.com/realcollege-during-the-pandemic/>