



May 15, 2022

Senator \_\_\_\_\_  
Capitol Office, CA State Senate  
1021 O Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814-4900

***Re: Support for SB 885 (Laird): Foster Youth in Community College***

Dear Assembly Member,

The Foster Care Project (FCP) has been a long running ministry at All Saints Church. They have endorsed Senate Bill SB 885, Supporting Foster Youth in Community Colleges Act, and I write in strong support of this bill. This bill expands NextUp programs across the California Community College (CCC) system to connect current and former foster youth students with student centered support services and assist this vulnerable population with their academic success and college completion.

For the past nineteen years FCP has worked with our local legislators to improve the path from high school to college for young people in foster care and to provide the support these students need in college to succeed. We were delighted when our then state Senator, Carol Liu, carried the legislation that established the NextUp program.

The program provides a comprehensive array of services to promote college retention and degree attainment which include: consultation and eligibility verification; counseling; book and supply grants; tutoring; independent living and financial literacy skills support; career guidance; transfer counseling; childcare and transportation assistance; and referrals to health services, mental health services, housing assistance and a host of other supportive services. A recent report from the California Community College Chancellor's Office found that foster youth participating in the program were more likely to remain enrolled from term to term – 68% remained enrolled versus 48% of non-NextUp foster youth.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated existing inequities between foster youth and their peers. A research study found that more than a quarter of foster youth (28%) stopped attending classes, and 1 in 8 reported dropping out altogether due to the pandemic. Given the plethora of challenges foster youth have to overcome to succeed in college, the NextUp program provides a comprehensive support system to meet these students where they are.

Unfortunately, the success of this program is limited to 20 CCC districts, resulting in just 46 of the 116 colleges offering the program. Since the funding was made available by district rather than college, multi-college districts have an inherent advantage as funding is largely based on the number of foster youth enrolled across the district. As a result, many colleges with significant



foster youth populations do not currently receive funding. This legislation seeks to remedy this statutory limitation placed on the NextUp program and allows additional campuses the resources they need to establish and support this crucial support system. By passing SB 885, the Legislature will highlight its continued commitment to provide for the safety, health, and overall well-being of our most disadvantaged students.

For these reasons, I strongly support SB 885 and I urge you to support it as well.

Sincerely,

(Print Name) \_\_\_\_\_

(Address) \_\_\_\_\_

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