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SB 1050 (De León) College Readiness
As Introduced April 7, 2016

PURPOSE:

Establish a stronger pipeline from K-12 high schools, particularly those that enroll 75% or more low-income, English learner, and foster youth, to the University of California and other postsecondary educational institutions.

BACKGROUND:

Last year, Senate Democrats expanded access to higher education for California students with budget proposals that created 10,400 additional slots at the California State University (CSU) system and 5,000 more at the University of California (UC).

Now it will be a priority to make sure these slots also provide educational opportunities for California's public school students from poor and working families. These students need a college degree to move up the economic ladder and prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow and this path starts in our K-12 schools.

The state's future economic success depends upon an educated and skilled workforce. According to the Public Policy Institute of California, current college graduation rates will hit the state's workforce with a shortage of 1.1 million workers who qualify for jobs that require a bachelor's degree in 2030.

In developing strategies to increase the number of college graduates, the relationship between the K-12 school system and the state's public universities must be strengthened. Of the 6 million students enrolled in our K-12 public schools, over half are from low-income families, 58-percent. These children represent California's future high school graduates and college students and we have to provide them with the tools to succeed in their education.

A student's ability to earn a bachelor degree and the economic stability of our state are both inextricably linked. Workers that hold a bachelor's degree earn 56-percent more in salary than those with high school degrees. On average, individuals who earn a degree are also likely to spend fewer years receiving state aid, four fewer years in poverty, and spend 10 fewer months in incarcerated.

Right now, a major roadblock preventing many students from reaching college is that many have limited access to completing the necessary coursework needed to qualify for admission into UC and CSU. Known as the "A-G" coursework, dismal completion rates among a majority of our high

school students have contributed to the lack of college readiness and a deficit in the state's bachelor's degrees.

It is the responsibility of the K-12 school system and our public universities to ensure all students have access to a rigorous college readiness curriculum with "A-G" and advanced placement courses that prepares them to attend college and thrive. Students should not be penalized for attending a school that does not provide access to such a curriculum.

The state must provide support by incentivizing the two systems work together to create a pipeline from high school to our four-year university system. 80 percent of California high school students graduate from high school, but less than half are prepared to attend a four-year university. All California high school students, regardless of their families' income, should have access to rigorous coursework, quality counseling services and exposure to college through partnerships between high schools and higher education institutions.

According to the Campaign for College Opportunity, this difference in student admissions must improve "quickly, otherwise a significant population will continue to be shut out from California's flagship public university system."

All California high school students, regardless of their economic status, must be ready and have access to enter our public university system as freshman students.

PROPOSAL:

- Establish the College Readiness Subject Matter Project at UC to provide K-12 public school staff professional development to improve "A-G" course completion rates, college-going rates, and the college readiness of students.
 - Establish the K-12 College Readiness Block Grant to better prepare low-income and underrepresented high school students for admission to postsecondary institutions.
 - Require UC, as a condition of receiving any enrollment funding in the 2016 State Budget, to do the following:
 - Increase the admission to UC of students from high schools that enroll 75% or more low-income, English learner, and/or foster youth students (i.e., Local Control Funding Formula Plus Students).
 - Provide additional support to underrepresented, first generation college students to help them succeed in college.
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Support:

Opposition:

For more information, please contact: Kimberly Rodriguez, Office of Senator De León, at (916) 651-4024.