



**For Immediate Distribution**

May 9, 2018

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## **CALIFORNIA GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES GO ON THE RECORD WITH HIGHER EDUCATION PRIORITIES**

*Chiang, Newsom, and Villaraigosa present their top higher education priorities and commit to setting a college attainment goal while closing racial equity gaps*

**Los Angeles, CA** – With under a month to go before California’s primary election, the Campaign for College Opportunity has released a new publication and three videos to inform voters about the leading gubernatorial candidates’ higher education priorities.

[On the Record: California’s Gubernatorial Candidates on Higher Education](#) and three accompanying [forum videos](#) presents responses provided by John Chiang, Gavin Newsom, and Antonio Villaraigosa to a series of questions on the major higher education issues impacting the state today. Gubernatorial candidate John Cox was invited but unable to schedule a forum or respond to the ***On the Record*** questionnaire within the timeframe allotted to all candidates.

***On the Record*** and the three individual gubernatorial forums represent the first time this election season that the leading gubernatorial candidates have explicitly dedicated time to addressing higher education. Their engagement reflects their understanding that California voters see the economy and education as the most significant issues affecting the state.

California’s next Governor will have to address a growing shortfall of workers who possess the degrees needed to fill critical jobs. Given California’s future depends upon an educated workforce that keeps the state’s innovative edge and maintains our standing as the fifth largest economy in the world, ***On the Record*** and the three gubernatorial forum videos, are an essential resource for learning about the vision and ideas California’s next Governor has for higher education.

Among the issues each candidate was asked to address, are:

- The California Master Plan for Higher Education, adopting a statewide attainment goal, as well as establishing a higher education coordinating body.
- The cost of higher education in California.
- How to ensure more students enroll and are admitted to California’s public universities after high school graduation.
- How to ensure more students successfully transfer from community college to a four-year university.
- The needs of California’s undocumented students in higher education.

“To keep pace with California’s economic demands, as well as the public will of voters, California’s next Governor will have to prioritize higher education to ensure it is accessible, affordable, and

able to produce the degrees our state needs,” said Michele Siqueiros, President of The Campaign for College Opportunity. “It’s reassuring to see the state’s leading gubernatorial candidates take the time to discuss with California voters the tangible ways they want to strengthen college opportunity.”

Particularly reassuring was the consensus between Chiang, Newsom, and Villaraigosa to set a college attainment goal and close racial equity gaps. The following are some of the other top priorities each candidate identified:

California State Treasurer John Chiang:

- Supporting two years of free community college for every student ... [and providing] a debt-free option at a public university.
- Reducing UC and CSU tuition and fees to their pre-2009 fee hike levels.
- Holding our institutions of higher education accountable for improved results, including time to degree, responding to the needs of increasingly diverse student bodies, lowering student debt, and addressing the projected gap between future workforce needs and the number of expected graduates.

California Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom:

- Reinvesting in public higher education and providing access to every eligible Californian.
- Guaranteeing two free years of community college tuition, create pathways to quality jobs, and reduce debt for students pursuing a bachelor’s degree.
- Creating a new higher education coordinating council to set bold statewide goals and hold institutions accountable to them.

Former Los Angeles City Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa:

- Launching a California Dream Corps that allows students to provide community service and earn a year of free college.
- Building a new California State University at Stockton campus and a medical school at the University of California, Merced.
- Increasing access by expanding quality online education and aligning our higher education system with workforce demands and addressing lifelong learning needs so that all Californians can access the skills training needed to adapt to changing economic forces through their lifetimes.

To read ***On the Record*** with complete responses from each gubernatorial candidate or watch the gubernatorial forum videos, please click [here](#). The responses provided by each gubernatorial candidate have been presented in a fair and consistent manner, without editorial comment, scoring, or editing.

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