

March 10, 2021

The Honorable Jose Medina
Chair, Assembly Higher Education Committee
1020 N Street, Room 173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 1432 (Low) Position: Sponsor

Dear Assemblymember Medina:

The California Federation of Teachers (CFT) is proud to sponsor Assembly Bill 1432 (Low) which eliminates the Calbright College allowing the legislature to redirect those funds as well as any remaining unspent one-time dollars back to the California Community College System.

Despite the investment of over \$140 million in taxpayer dollars, Calbright remains unaccredited, has failed to reach enrollment goals and other benchmarks, while providing duplicative program offerings already available through California's community college system. We can no longer afford to waste any more of the states limited resources on this failed experiment.

The need for Calbright was never clear. All three programs offered by Calbright, per the California Code of Regulations Title 5 §55000(m) definition of program, are already offered by existing, accredited California Community Colleges. The programs are duplicative in content, which is a direct violation of California Education Code §75001(d)(1).

Additionally, even before the COVID-19 pandemic there were numerous examples of investment in online infrastructure and expanded program offerings for underserved populations by the Community College System:

- The California Virtual Campus (<https://cvc.edu/>) – Online Education Initiative (CVC-OEI) is a collaborative effort among California Community Colleges (CCCs) to ensure that significantly more students are able to complete their educational goals by increasing both access to and success in high-quality online courses. Composed of high-quality online courses, resources for students, and technology, the CVC-OEI represents a comprehensive and collaborative program that leverages effective practices and technology to significantly increase the opportunity for higher education degree attainment in California.
- San Diego Community College District Continuing Education's (SDCE) newly launching iComAcademy (sdce.edu/icom). This was California's first, completely free, fully online, and fully comprehensive, community college built to serve nontraditional students. This program includes certificates and degrees, as well as badging and micro-credentialing, which will be expanded in collaboration with industry partners

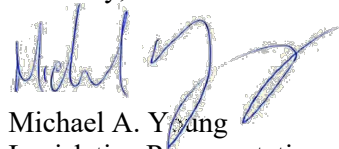
These are just two examples of successful programs that could be built upon to help meet the stated goals of Calbright but in a more robust manner, at fully accredited institutions, with both online and in-person support services, and at a fraction of the cost to the taxpayer.

Additionally, community colleges have proven themselves able to quickly respond and adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic by providing almost all its courses online. Throughout this pandemic the community college system has been able to build on the existing online infrastructure and expand virtual resources to help meet the varying needs of the over 2.1 million students attending 116 community colleges.

The continued investment of limited state funds to the failed Calbright experiment is an inappropriate use of taxpayer dollars. Instead, California should be redirected those investments back to locally-accountable, fully-accredited community college districts to expand programs and resources to help ensure student success.

For these reasons, we urge an “AYE” vote on AB 1432 (Low) when it comes before you in Assembly Higher Education Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael A. Young", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael A. Young
Legislative Representative
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Cc: Committee Members
Assemblymember Evan Low