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February 22, 2011

The Honorable Mark Leno
Chair, Joint Legislative Budget Committee

Dear Senator Leno,

We are writing on behalf of the more than 1,000 financial aid administrators who belong to the California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (CASFAA) representing over 500 postsecondary institutions of higher education. We are concerned about the Senate Budget Proposal that seeks to segregate and reduce the state financial aid available to students who seek access to an education provided by a Private Career College.

CASFAA opposes a proposal to reduce Cal Grant tuition assistance for students who choose private for-profit education. The Cal Grant Program provides funds to students, not institutions. Students should be free to take their Cal Grant to the accredited college of their choice in California, including private, for-profit colleges. To reduce student choice and access to a Private Career College is to force these economically disadvantaged students to borrow more or to postpone their post-secondary education. These private for-profit colleges can be appropriately regulated, and should be, but denying student access and choice sets a bad precedent. Additionally, the LAO believes if these cuts are approved that a shift in student behavior from attending a Private Career College to a public college or university may cost the State more since students attending public institutions receive more State funding than students attending private institutions. California's economy is best served by no disruption in career training and no reduction in Cal Grant.

CASFAA supports state budget solutions that protect student access and choice for all Californians while enhancing the health of higher education and supporting the viability of the state's economy. Please let us know if we can provide history, technical information, further explanation or any other assistance.

Sincerely,

Craig Yamamoto
Vice President, State Issues

S. Lynn Fox
President

cc: Senate Budget Committee
Assembly Budget Committee