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Assembly California Legislature



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April 1, 2019

Assembly Budget Chair Phil Ting
State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assembly Budget Sub. 2 Chair Kevin McCarty
State Capitol, Room 2136
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Pilot Program for Early Childhood Education through Community Engagement

Dear Assemblymembers Ting and McCarty:

I respectfully request your support in providing a one-time \$5 million budget allocation for the infrastructure and site development of a child care center at CSU Channel Islands (CSUCI). Currently, an estimated 12,000 preschool age children in Ventura County cannot access or participate in preschool due to lack of available space, cost, and program limitations. CSUCI offers the only Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood in Ventura County, yet it lacks the laboratory space needed to provide hands-on workforce training for student teachers.

A diverse group of local stakeholders including regional agricultural growers, community organizations, local governments, CSU Channel Islands, private foundations and elected officials in Ventura County have been exploring solutions to this challenge. This proposal seeks to leverage both public and private investment to establish a pilot program at CSU Channel Islands that will marry the preparation of early childhood teachers with community engagement. In addition, there is a strong potential for federal funding for this project, given that CSUCI is a Hispanic-serving institution.

With the Governor's Budget proposal to invest \$500 million of one-time General Fund dollars to build our state's child care infrastructure and child care workforce, I propose creating a pilot program through a center at CSUCI. The center would serve as a teaching and learning lab for CSUCI students and faculty, a policy institute to provide opportunities for collaborative research aimed at addressing the systemic challenges to equitable access to early childhood education, and a childcare facility to support the needs of the region's families.

Ventura County and CSUCI are uniquely positioned to support this pilot program. Approximately 36,000 farmworkers support Ventura County's agricultural industry. A 2017 community needs assessment found affordable and accessible child care and education is a critical need among regional farmworkers. This need is increasing as US and California farmworkers migrate less, but eligibility for child care and preschool subsidies remains dependent on migrant status. Community partners envision this center serving as a location to assist with the distinct child care needs of this population. In addition, as CSUCI works to



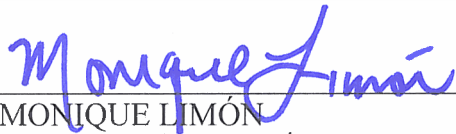
eliminate the equity gap in student achievement, attention to child care accessibility for students will be essential. Research shows campus child care contributes to greater access, retention and graduation, particularly for female students and students of color in higher education. At CSUCI, 64% of students are female and 53% come from historically underrepresented populations, making the presence of a child care facility on campus even more important. This center would not only be available to students with children, but it would also create a pipeline for the development of early child care educators for the entire region.

The proposed center will serve as a pilot that can provide a framework for other universities and regions throughout the State. This modest investment will enable the Legislature to establish a new method for childcare workforce development, a center for academic research to inform future policy on the topic, and a stronger childcare infrastructure for the many families in the region that would benefit from much needed childcare slots.

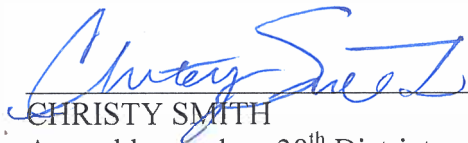
Thank you for your consideration.



JACQUI IRWIN
Assemblymember, 44th District



MONIQUE LIMÓN
Assemblymember, 37th District



CHRISTY SMITH
Assemblymember, 38th District