



Office of Government Relations

COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA

December 2015 Newsletter

Potential Policy Issues to Impact Community Colleges

With the start of the second year of the 2015-16 legislative session, it is time to start looking at public policy issues under consideration by members of the state legislature during this session. Following are some issues that legislators may be considering that will impact our colleges and students.

Workforce Development

With the release of the Strong Workforce Report and a significant system budget request of \$200 million, many legislators have expressed interest in authoring legislation impacting CTE programs. The Governor, Department of Finance and legislators will all be considering implementation of reform options that are presented in the report. These include: financing CTE, alignment of standards, Cal Grant C awards, course approval, and others.

College Affordability

President Obama's proposal to make community college tuition free for all Americans has raised the profile of issues surrounding the costs of attendance. While our institutions offer the very generous BOG fee waiver and the lowest tuition in the nation, California community college students still face significant financial barriers to higher education. College leaders in California have expressed interest in expanding the conversation to include other burdensome student costs. Next year, legislation will like address financial aid, textbooks, open educational resources and other college affordability topics.

Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association

On January 11, the US Supreme Court will hear *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, a case involving a union's right to collect fees from non-members. Depending on the court's ruling, this could dramatically reduce the revenue that a public employee union can collect from its membership. In the final days of the 2015 legislative year, a proposal was being discussed that would grant union representatives 30 minutes with public employees to discuss the benefits of union membership. This mandatory union orientation proposal was nearly identical to one imposed on In-Home Support Services (IHSS) care providers early in the 2015 legislative session. The proposal also would require existing contracts to be reopened for purposes of negotiating employer programs for current employees during which bargaining unit representatives can provide information on the benefits of union membership. Expect a legislative effort to mitigate a potential Supreme Court decision that in part or in whole sides with the plaintiffs.

Facilities

The Kindergarten through Community College Public Education Facilities Bond Act of 2016, which would authorize the sale of \$9 billion in general obligation bonds, including \$2 billion for community college capital outlay projects, has qualified for the November 2016 General Election ballot. However, the Administration has been unwilling to support additional statewide debt in this area. Additionally, organizations negotiating a Proposition 30 extension proposal are concerned the initiative would pull votes from any tax extension ballot measure. We can expect discussion around a smaller bond with a needs-based focus as a potential alternative instead of a large-scale bond based on the current facilities program.