



The Education Trust–West

Fierce advocates for educational
justice, pre-k through college.

March 15, 2024

The Honorable Mike Fong
Chair, Assembly Higher Education
1020 N Street, Room 173
Sacramento, California 95814

**RE: SUPPORT FOR AB 1887 as
amended on 3/13/24**

Dear Chair Fong,

As an organization committed to advancing policies and practices that dismantle the racial and economic barriers embedded in the California education system, the EdTrust-West is pleased to **SUPPORT** Assembly Bill 1887 by Assemblymember Cervantes. This bill is an urgency measure that would extend the financial aid application deadline by one month, thereby allowing students and families, especially low-income college-bound students, more time to submit critical financial aid forms.

At the end of 2020, the U.S. Department of Education was ordered to revamp the federal Free Application for Federal Student Aid, commonly known as FAFSA. However, unintentional delays caused the revamped application to be activated two months behind schedule in 2023. This created delays in the typical timeline for colleges to make admissions decisions, provide financial aid awards, and complete their enrollment process.

Another significant problem with the revamped FAFSA rollout is that students with parents who lack a Social Security number found themselves left with an error message and unable to complete the online application. In other words, California students with parents who are undocumented are still unable to apply for financial aid through FAFSA, even if they themselves are citizens of the United States. At California's 150 public institutions of higher education, these technical issues continue to confuse, or prevent thousands of mixed status families (students with undocumented parents) from completing a FAFSA application. While the U.S. Department of Education's recent [technical fix](#) for students whose parents or guardians do not have a SSN, this interim solution is too close to California's [already modified April 2nd deadline](#).

Lastly, it is important to note that despite California's universal financial aid application completion requirement (California Budget 2021-22 and [AB 469](#)), California is significantly behind in FAFSA completion compared to this time last year. As of March 8, 2024, [30.7 percent of California's high school class of 2024 submitted a FAFSA](#). This represents a decline of 42.9 percent compared to the last academic year. This alarming decline mirrors national trends and signals that **students and families need more time to complete financial aid applications**. By extending the state financial aid programs deadline from April 2 to May 2, we can alleviate some of the anxiety and stress for students and more importantly, allow them to meet the Cal Grant deadline.

It is for these reasons, we strongly support AB 1887 (Cervantes) and respectfully ask for an **AYE** vote.

Sincerely,

Brian Rivas

Senior Director of Policy and Government Relations