



ASSEMBLYMEMBER — DISTRICT 26

Patrick Ahrens

P R E S S R E L E A S E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Assemblymember Patrick Ahrens Introduces Bill Expanding California College Promise Program to Allow Community Colleges to Waive Fees for All Students for First Two Years, Availing Fee Waivers for Part-time Students

SACRAMENTO, CA – Assemblymember Patrick Ahrens (D-Silicon Valley) introduced AB 537 to remove the requirement that California community college students be enrolled full-time to benefit from the California College Promise program, thereby expanding the ability for community colleges to waive fees for part-time students for up to two academic years.

According to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office nearly 2/3rds of the 1.9 million students enrolled at California's community colleges are considered part-time. Expanding California's College Promise Program to part-time students will help support California's most underserved and struggling students, many of whom are unable to attend full-time because they must work to provide for themselves and their families.

Assemblymember Ahrens said, "I am proud to lead the fight to expand the California College Promise program to help our neediest students by expanding the ability of our community colleges to waive the fees for part-time students for two years. Existing law requires that a student be full-time in order to receive a fee waiver through the program, which erroneously locks out our least advantaged students and perpetuates inequity and inequality at our community colleges."

James McKeever, President of AFT-1521 and Professor of Sociology at Pierce College said, "Thank you Assemblymember Ahrens for authoring a bill to expand the College Promise to part-time students. This will help our students, many who have family responsibilities, pursue their academic dreams without debt. This legislation will help our students, our community, and our state."

AB 537 is sponsored by the CFT – A Union of Educators & Classified Professionals, AFL-CIO, and awaits referral to policy committees in the State Assembly.

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Patrick Ahrens represents the Silicon Valley in the California State Assembly. He was elected in 2024 after serving as a Trustee on the Foothill-De Anza Community College District Board. He serves as a Member of the Assembly Committees on Budget, Budget Subcommittee No. 2 on Human Services, Business and Professions, Communications and Conveyance, Rules, and Transportation. Assemblymember Ahrens is the Co-Chair of the California Legislative Technology & Innovation Caucus, and a Member of the California Legislative Jewish Caucus and the Bay Area Caucus.