



League of United Latin American Citizens

April 3, 2017

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The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Member
United States Senate

Dear Senator Sanders:

On behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the nation's oldest and largest Latino civil rights organization in the country, I would like to express our organization's support for the College for All Act of 2017 legislation that would eliminate tuition and fees at public four-year colleges and universities for those making up to \$125,000 and make community colleges tuition-and fee-free for all students.

As you know, college costs and incurred debt are significant challenges facing Latino students. While students of previous generations were able to pay for college with their job earnings, today the picture is much different. In fact, the cost of average tuition/room and board has increased over 260 percent since 1980. In contrast, the median Hispanic household income has remained stagnate since the start of the recession hovering around \$42,400 a year. With only modest increases in the Pell grant over the last several congressional cycles, Latino students, who rely largely on federal financial aid programs to offset the cost of college, are particularly affected by the ever increasing costs of obtaining a higher education. That is why our organization is particularly glad that you are championing legislation that would eliminate tuition and fees at public four-year colleges and universities for those making up to \$125,000 and make community colleges tuition-and fee-free for all students.

Strengthening the college pipeline is also a priority for LULAC National. The LULAC National Education Service Centers run various TRIO programs throughout the country serving countless students each year by helping them become college and career ready. We welcome language in your legislation that doubles funding for TRIO programs and increases funding for the GEAR UP Program so more first-generation and low-income students, like those serve by LULAC, can enroll in and graduate from college.

Thank you for your longstanding support of working class families. On behalf of the 135,000 members of LULAC, we wholeheartedly endorse the College for All Act of 2017 and look forward to working with you to make college a reality for all Latinos. Should we be able to provide any assistance, please have a member of your staff contact Luis Torres at latorres@lulac.org.

Sincerely,

Roger C. Rocha, Jr.
LULAC National President