

NMICC

NEW MEXICO INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Central New Mexico Community College • Clovis Community College • Luna Community College
Mesalands Community College • New Mexico Junior College • New Mexico Military Institute
Northern New Mexico College • San Juan College • Santa Fe Community College • Western New Mexico University

February 26, 2021

Senator George Munoz
Chair, Senate Finance
Box 2679
Gallup, NM 87305

Re: SB135 – Opportunity Scholarship Act
DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Senator Munoz:

I am writing to express support for SB135. This bill establishes the Opportunity Scholarship Act, which would provide critical financial support to students who often don't have access to adequate financial aid to help them complete their college education. This is important because:

- Surveys of college students in New Mexico and throughout the country consistently cite lack of financial resources as the number one reason students fail to complete their education. A car that breaks down, a broken pair of eyeglasses, or an unexpected medical bill can derail a student's progress toward college completion. The Opportunity Scholarship supports students by more fully covering educational expenses so the student's personal budget is better able to absorb unexpected financial challenges.
- Community college students are typically adults who work and attend college part-time, often while working and raising children of their own. Yet most scholarship programs, including the Legislative Lottery Scholarship, are designed to support traditional students who go to college shortly after high school and who attend college full time. The Opportunity Scholarship supports non-traditional part-time students so they can get the training they need to advance in their careers and to better support their families.
- As New Mexico strives to diversify and grow our economy, it is critical that we rapidly and purposefully develop a highly skilled workforce. This means we must not only prepare recent high school graduates for careers, but we must train and retrain adults for new jobs or for advancement in their current career path. The Opportunity Scholarship makes it possible for New Mexico to move rapidly in preparing a workforce for an evolving economy.

I urge you to support the SB135, the Opportunity Scholarship Act. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathy Ulibarri
Executive Director
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