



September 14, 2021

VIA Email to the Office of the Governor and Author

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 469 (Reyes) – Pupil instruction: financial aid applications – REQUEST FOR GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE

Dear Governor Newsom:

The League of Women Voters of California writes to request your signature on AB 469 (Reyes), which would facilitate the completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the form established for purposes of the California Dream Act by requiring the State Department of Education to share the current school year's roster of pupils with the Student Aid Commission and requiring the Commission to share and match data on pupil completion of financial aid forms, as specified.

Currently, California's student financial aid application process is overly complex and burdensome to students and families. Many eligible students do not complete a financial aid form because they believe they are ineligible, have no information on how to apply, or do not want to share personal information because of deportation fears. While the financial aid system is intended to make college "access and affordability a guarantee to every qualified student," California currently ranks 30th in the nation in application rates. On average, California's students leave \$550,000,000 in federal and state financial aid on the table. According to the *Public Policy Institute of California*, "Financial aid applications [are] especially important for supporting college enrollment among low-income and other underrepresented students, including African Americans and Latinos," yet, "in the 2020–21 academic year, only 38.6% of California's high school seniors completed the FAFSA."

The League applauds your leadership, through the budget and budget trailer bill, to enact processes that will increase FAFSA completion rates and thereby advance higher education access, affordability, and equity for all California students with financial need. AB 469 further facilitates and operationalizes this important work. **The League of Women Voters of California supports AB 469 and requests your signature. Thank you.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol Moon Goldberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carol Moon Goldberg
President