

Written Testimony ON Senate Bill 1 - Public Community/Junior Colleges
Senate Finance Committee
February 6, 2025

Honorable Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Hinojosa, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on Senate Bill 1. Philanthropy Advocates brings together almost 60 private, community, and corporate foundations working across Texas to improve outcomes for Texas students and equip them for economic mobility.

We applaud the committee for the investments made in community colleges last session, and we thank you for the funding contemplated in the introduced version of Senate Bill 1. Maintaining the funding support for strong student outcomes sends a powerful signal about the state's continued support for ensuring a strong community college sector.

By 2030, over 60% of all Texas jobs will require some kind of postsecondary credential, but only 48% of adults in Texas today have earned these credentials. Our long-term competitiveness will depend on our ability to attract and retain quality jobs that require more Texans to earn credentials of value beyond high school at a faster pace. Through *Building a Talent Strong Texas*, the state has set a goal of ensuring enough Texans meet the 60% postsecondary credential attainment necessary for our economy.

Philanthropy Advocates knows Texas cannot reach this goal without education systems that equip students for lifelong academic and career success. Specifically, we believe Texas cannot maintain global competitiveness or advance economic mobility for Texas families without thriving community colleges.

Texas philanthropy has long supported efforts to achieve similar goals the state has committed to in House Bill 8 from the 2023 legislative session. For example, in East Texas, our members partner with community colleges to provide data-driven programs that lead to job opportunities in high-wage, in-demand careers that their region needs, such as nurses and CDL truck drivers - both occupations with average salaries well above the median yearly income rates in their community.

We appreciate your continued funding of the state's new outcome-based model of community college and the other strategic investments to strengthen our higher education infrastructure in SB 1, including funding the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's data modernization efforts. We also look forward to supporting additional funding in the supplemental appropriations bill that recognizes the dynamic nature of the funding formulas and the outstanding outcomes our students and community colleges have achieved during this biennium. We believe sustained focus and investments in these core components of education will continue to result in measurable impact for Texas students and our state.

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