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April 26, 2016

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez, Chair  
Assembly Appropriations Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2114  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Subject: Support AB 2017 (McCarty, as of 04/07/16) College Mental Health Services Program**

Dear Assemblymember Gonzalez:

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges is writing to express our support for AB 2017 (McCarty), which would establish and fund the College Mental Health Services Trust Account.

AB 2017 involves reallocation and transfer of existing funds rather than allocation of new funding. Thus, any new costs would be minor and absorbable, and they would be a worthwhile investment given the benefits that this legislation might provide.

Many college and university students will experience a mental health condition at some point in their educational careers. Research indicates that as many as 1 in 4 students have a diagnosable mental illness, but many do not seek help when they need it. Depression is the number one reason students drop out of school and can lead to problems such as suicide and homelessness, and mental health challenges may affect students' academic performance as well as their ability to fully participate in and complete their education.

Educators have a duty to ensure a productive and safe educational environment for students so that the students may learn and thrive, and improvements in a college's mental health services such as campus-wide awareness and prevention efforts, stigma reduction, early recognition, personnel and peer training, mental health screening, improved partnerships with and access to community resources, integrated care, and consistent funding are all necessary to addressing the needs of students.

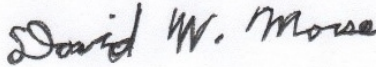
AB 2017 would, "establish the College Mental Health Services Trust Account, would transfer \$40,000,000 annually to that account from the Mental Health Services Fund, and would appropriate those funds to the department to create a grant program for public community colleges, colleges, and universities to improve access to mental health services on campus." This legislation would provide much-need

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funding to improve and expand mental health services to all students in California public higher education, benefiting not only the students but the California economy by enhancing support that will allow more students to complete their education and become productive members of the workforce

**For these reasons, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges supports Assembly Bill 2017 (McCarty, as of 04/07/16).** Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,



David Morse  
President  
Academic Senate for California Community Colleges

pc: Assemblymember Kevin McCarty  
Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee