

January 27, 2022
To: House Appropriations and Finance Committee
Re: SB140 Opportunity Scholarship Act

Dear Madam Lundstrom and Honorable Members,

The Opportunity Scholarship Act is the gateway to a better future for all New Mexicans. We here at the Davis New Mexico Scholarship, the largest private scholarship in state history for New Mexican students, are proud to stand behind this legislation that will continue our state's commitment to college access for *all* New Mexicans.

The long-term benefits of a post-secondary degree are clear; higher education is one of the best investments one can make in the long term health and prosperity of a community, and this bill would enable more New Mexicans than ever to pursue their dreams and find financial stability. The benefits of so-called "free college" are clear: more people better qualified for the higher wage jobs and necessary social services positions we so desperately need to fill.

Additionally, a key tenet of the Opportunity Scholarship Act is the promise to fund college for adults, part-time learners, and people who want to return to school. These provisions close important gaps in the existing infrastructure in place to fund people who are seeking a degree. I urge you to keep these important provisions intact.

Moreover, as scholarship providers ourselves, we understand the power in consolidating programs to make scholarships more accessible for students, particularly those coming from underserved communities. The streamlining of the state scholarship process will enable easier outreach to students, families, and counselors, and will centralize what has previously been a difficult bureaucracy for people seeking a degree in New Mexico.

There are many of us working to promote college access across our state. And, the number one barrier for most students continues to be the lack of affordable options to pursue Higher Education. The Opportunity Scholarship Act is an important step in the right direction for New Mexico and the people who live here—I urge you to act quickly to establish this streamlined scholarship program for the benefit of all New Mexicans.

Sincerely,



Sam Ritter
Director, Davis New Mexico Scholarship



505.982.8921
www.davisnm.org

1101 Camino de Cruz Blanca
Santa Fe / NM // 87505