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February 9, 2022

The Honorable George K. Muñoz
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Box 2679
Gallup, NM 87305

Re: Letter of Support for SB 140 – Opportunity Scholarship Act

Dear Chair Muñoz:

On behalf of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), I am writing to express our strong support of Senate Bill (SB) 140 (Opportunity Scholarship Act) combining the New Mexico Opportunity Scholarship, Legislative Endowment Scholarship, and College Affordability Grant into a single combined fund. This new Opportunity Scholarship Act will cover full tuition and fees for tens of thousands of New Mexico residents, whether attending college full- or part-time.

New Mexico is an incredibly diverse state as indicated by the following numbers:

- Almost half of New Mexico undergraduates are Hispanic.
- New Mexico is home to 24 Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), federally defined as educating 25% or more full-time enrollment Hispanic students.
- The state is also home to two emerging HSIs (more than 10% Hispanic FTE students).

Enacting SB 140 allows students at these campuses to complete their degree without the burden of tuition and fees, enabling them to complete college in a timely and affordable manner. Research consistently shows that college graduates are less likely to be unemployed, and on average earn more than those with only a high school diploma.

As the only national association representing Hispanic-Serving Institutions and the students they serve, HACU respectfully requests your support of SB 140 (Opportunity Scholarship Act) when it is heard in your Committee. If HACU can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact our Assistant Vice President for State Advocacy Erica Romero at (916) 442-0392 or via email at erica.romero@hacu.net.

Respectfully,

Antonio R. Flores
President and CEO

cc: The Honorable Michelle Lujan Grisham
The Honorable Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics
The Honorable Joy Garratt
The Honorable Mimi Stewart, President Pro Tempore, New Mexico State Senate
The Honorable Gregory Baca, Minority Floor Leader, New Mexico State Senate
Members, New Mexico Senate Finance Committee
HACU New Mexico Members