



January 28, 2022

To: Senate Finance Committee

Re: Support SB140 – Opportunity Scholarship

Chairman Munoz and Honorable Members:

I am writing today to give full support to Senate Bill 140, the Opportunity Scholarship Act, with the vision of ensuring all New Mexicans have the opportunity to attend college. It is a fact that attending college or university at any level increases an individual's financial viability and job security. It also has positive impact on community and family well-being. For many of our young people it is a pathway out of violence and poverty.

Yet, the cost of attending college or university is a deterrent for many of our community members from rural and poor communities. I can attest to this, for as a young, Native woman, if I had not been able to access financial support, I would not have attended college. It is not an overstatement to say that attending college saved my life and changed my path. I also struggled for years to repay student debt.

The power of this bill is that anyone, first time student, veteran, working parent, someone who may have struggled and left school and then returned, could go to college tuition free. And, hopefully graduate debt-free! This brings a smile to my heart and tears to my eyes thinking that my Tribal community members and nieces and nephews would be among the beneficiaries of this forward visioning of our state legislature.

We are fortunate here in New Mexico to have access to strong and respected public colleges and universities. We are fortunate to have a state legislature that is willing to invest in our people, our communities, our education systems and our economic future. Supporting SB140 makes all this possible!

Sincerely,

Corrine Sanchez, PhD  
Executive Director