



October 18, 2011

The Honorable Carol Liu  
Chair, Senate Subcommittee on Educational Research  
California Senate  
State Capitol Building, Room  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: California Community Colleges  
Draft Recommendations Student Success Task Force  
Discontinuation of State apportionment for Older Adult programs  
*OPPOSE*  
Hearing Date: October 19, 2011**

Dear Senator Liu:

On behalf of AARP's 3.2 million members in California I am writing to oppose the proposal to defund programs for Older Adults in California community colleges. Older adults are a vital and integral part of California's population. To prioritize them out of the California community colleges takes us in the wrong direction.

Older Californians have paid taxes their entire life. In fact, it is California's older adults who envisioned and funded California's world class system of public higher education. The need for access to a public higher education does not end at the age of 24. In fact, with the changes in the economy, increases in life expectancy, the growing older adult population needs access to educational opportunity more than ever.

California's community colleges provide retraining and training opportunities for older adults who need to remain in the workforce or reenter the workforce. Many times these decisions come because retirement funds were insufficient to cover the costs of living, a death of a loved one, disease or disability, or other unexpected and unplanned events. The older adult programs are tailored specifically for this population and have faculty and staff with expertise to address their educational and non-educational needs.

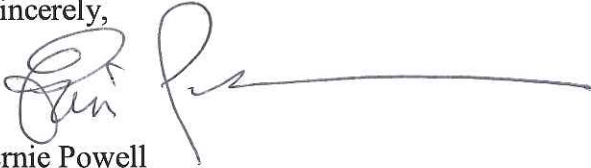
Recent research on brain plasticity shows that the human brain can be educated to slow down the onset of dementia. Research also show a variety of strategies for staying active, alert, and independent can be taught to our seniors so that remain vital members of our community rather than dependents of their families or the State.

That said, we know the older adult community to be among the poorest and with the most limited resources of any population in our State. It does not seem realistic or just to expect this population to pay for the complete cost of their education, i.e. to only have access to basically a totally private rather than a publicly funded education.

We understand that the State is in a budget crisis and AARP is willing to work together to find an equitable solution so that California continues to fund educational opportunity for our seniors; so that they can continue to contribute to the well-being of our State and not become its dependents.

Should you be interested in discussing this issue further, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at (916) 556-3021 or [epowell@aarp.org](mailto:epowell@aarp.org)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ernie Powell', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Ernie Powell  
Manager of Advocacy  
AARP California State Office

cc: Senate Committee on Educational Research  
Jack Scott, Chancellor, California Community Colleges  
California Community Colleges Educators of Older Adults