

**Introduced by Senator Liu**

February 25, 2009

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Senate Joint Resolution No. 2—Relative to college textbook affordability.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SJR 2, as introduced, Liu. Postsecondary education: college textbook affordability.

This measure would commend the Congress and the President of the United States for including the American Opportunity Tax Credit in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 enabling California to make college affordable for students. The measure would express the intent of the Legislature to adopt similar higher education tax credits when the state’s economic conditions improve.

Fiscal committee: yes.

- 1 WHEREAS, The importance of improving access to and
- 2 affordability of postsecondary education is critical to the nation’s
- 3 future economic well-being; and
- 4 WHEREAS, The last several decades have shown growth in the
- 5 educational requirements of jobs. Reports have demonstrated that
- 6 a majority of the jobs in the fastest growing occupations require
- 7 an associate degree or higher level of postsecondary education and
- 8 training; and
- 9 WHEREAS, Efforts to foster opportunities for developing a
- 10 highly skilled and educated workforce by reducing barriers that
- 11 prevent students from receiving a quality higher education are a
- 12 critical component of the nation’s and California’s economic
- 13 recovery; and

1 WHEREAS, A recent California State Auditor report has shown  
2 that increases in textbook prices have significantly outpaced median  
3 household income making it more likely that some students will  
4 forgo or delay attending college because of the financial burden;  
5 and

6 WHEREAS, For the 2007–08 academic year, the average  
7 textbook costs as a percentage of student fees and textbooks was  
8 as high as 59 percent in California’s system of public higher  
9 education; and

10 WHEREAS, During the last several years, the soaring costs of  
11 college textbook prices have become a barrier to student access to  
12 a postsecondary education, with textbook costs increasing at twice  
13 the rate of inflation followed by tuition increases; and

14 WHEREAS, The United States Government Accounting Office  
15 found that between December 1986 and December 2004, textbook  
16 prices nearly tripled while tuition and fees increased by 240  
17 percent; and

18 WHEREAS, Given that nearly one-half of undergraduates  
19 nationwide receive state and federal financial aid, efforts to make  
20 the overall cost of attendance more affordable, including the cost  
21 of textbooks, makes economic sense for California and the nation;  
22 and

23 WHEREAS, Nationwide, students and their families spend  
24 billions of dollars on new and used textbooks and, given that many  
25 students rely on government financial aid, escalating textbook  
26 prices can impact state and federal spending; and

27 WHEREAS, Providing students and their families a means to  
28 lessen the impact of the soaring costs of a college education  
29 through a higher education tax credit will improve access to and  
30 the affordability of a college education; now, therefore, be it

31 *Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of*  
32 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of California  
33 commends the Congress and the President of the United States for  
34 including the American Opportunity Tax Credit in the American  
35 Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 enabling California to  
36 make college affordable for students by providing financial relief  
37 to students and their families from the soaring costs of a college  
38 education; and be it further

39 *Resolved,* That the Legislature calls for the State of California,  
40 when the state’s economic conditions improve, to adopt a similar

1 higher education tax credit measure that will support efforts to  
2 make college more affordable for all California citizens; and be it  
3 further

4 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of  
5 this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United  
6 States, and to each Senator and Representative from California in  
7 the Congress of the United States.

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