

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 184

Introduced by Assembly Members Block and Ruskin

August 4, 2010

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 184—Relative to the Joint Committee on the Master Plan for Higher Education.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 184, as introduced, Block. Joint Committee on the Master Plan for Higher Education.

This measure would extend the existence of the Joint Committee on the Master Plan for Higher Education into the 2011–12 Regular Session, and authorize the joint committee to act until November 30, 2012, at which time its existence would terminate.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The review by the Joint Committee on the Master
2 Plan for Higher Education marks the 50th anniversary of the Master
3 Plan for Higher Education in California (Master Plan); and
4 WHEREAS, The joint committee convened in large measure
5 because of the widespread concern that our state's system of public
6 higher education is now at risk; and
7 WHEREAS, The Master Plan was, and remains, a
8 comprehensive policy framework. Upon its advent and in the
9 decades following, it signaled an unparalleled commitment to
10 higher education, of unrivaled size and scale. Through planned
11 and coordinated growth, it mandated the pioneering principles of
12 universal opportunity and universal access; and

1 WHEREAS, In our estimation, nothing has been more
2 responsible over the past several decades for the quality of life in
3 California and for California's economic prosperity than our system
4 of higher education; and

5 WHEREAS, During the comprehensive hearings of the joint
6 committee, there have been no experts to argue that California's
7 economy and social fabric can now benefit from a contraction of
8 either educational opportunities or educated people. Indeed, the
9 systematic review of higher education, with broad public and
10 stakeholder testimony, confirms that California's future depends
11 on an even more effectively educated people. Private investment
12 and growth are dependent upon an ever expanding number of
13 women and men ably prepared to contribute and compete in the
14 global marketplace, adding value through their superior knowledge,
15 imagination, and skill; and

16 WHEREAS, In light of this challenge, the joint committee has
17 reaffirmed the essential tenets of the Master Plan: universal access,
18 affordability, and high quality; and

19 WHEREAS, However, the joint committee also believes that
20 the Master Plan must be regarded as a living document. In many
21 ways, California has been transformed since the inception of the
22 Master Plan. Therefore, in order for our state and people to meet
23 the challenges of the 21st century, we will need the vision and
24 courage to ensure our system of higher education adapts when and
25 as necessary to meet the needs of the society that sustains it and
26 the demands of the new century; and

27 WHEREAS, The hearings of the joint committee have
28 demonstrated that, after five decades of success, our system of
29 higher education is now threatened. The system will not continue
30 to be effective automatically. It requires our renewed attention,
31 commitment, and support; and

32 WHEREAS, After objective and close scrutiny, the joint
33 committee has presented an agenda of needs accurately describing
34 what our people and state require from our system of higher
35 education to ensure California's success in the coming decades;
36 and

37 WHEREAS, The State of California has no articulated,
38 comprehensive statement of goals for California's system of higher
39 education. The Master Plan articulates values but not a set of public
40 policy goals based upon the outcomes required to meet the needs

1 of our state and our people. The lack of these goals makes it
2 difficult to develop sound systems of criteria for advancement or
3 clear systems of accountability; and

4 WHEREAS, Statewide goals, including the workforce needs of
5 the state, are essential for the effective functioning of our system
6 of public higher education, complemented by the work of private
7 colleges and universities; and

8 WHEREAS, In order for California to compete in the global
9 marketplace, replace the baby boomer generation, and ensure a
10 cohesive and democratic multicultural society, our state must
11 continue to support the unique genius of California's original 1960
12 Master Plan, namely its commitment to universal access for every
13 qualified student. This access provided our state and people the
14 distinction that enabled California to become the world leader in
15 higher education; and

16 WHEREAS, Given the economic needs of our state and the
17 labor-market needs of our economy, universal access gives us the
18 greatest possibility of meeting those long-term needs. In addition,
19 in a state as diverse as California, the maintenance of this promise
20 gives hope to all Californians who wish to attain a higher education.

21 This hope is essential to our success and cohesion as a people; and

22 WHEREAS, Affordability must be established within a clearly
23 articulated and agreed upon framework of shared cost, between
24 the student who benefits directly from a quality education and the
25 public, for whom the student's education is an investment for the
26 public good. As a practical matter in the real world, the absence
27 of affordability makes the achievement of universal access an
28 impossible dream; and

29 WHEREAS, Our state must recognize the limited financial
30 capacity of many of our eligible students and that the nature of our
31 response makes their matriculation feasible; and

32 WHEREAS, The state needs to consider the entirety of the costs
33 accruing to students and their families with regard to participating
34 in higher education, the manner in which we recognize and balance
35 the individual private and the overall social benefits of higher
36 education, and the extent to which we are willing to subject our
37 students to a future burdened by large loan debt; and

38 WHEREAS, California should adopt clear metrics for measuring
39 whether our goals are achieved by our financial aid policies. In

1 designing those financial aid policies, we should evaluate the use
2 of incentives that can help us reach our desired outcomes; and

3 WHEREAS, The pledge of California's original Master Plan
4 included, along with universal access and affordability, the
5 assurance of quality; and

6 WHEREAS, Quality will be required in order for California to
7 provide a higher education that will serve to keep California
8 competitive in our global economy, especially because of the
9 tripling now by both our global competitors, India and the People's
10 Republic of China, of the annual number of doctoral degrees in
11 science and technology above those produced by the entire United
12 States; and

13 WHEREAS, In this regard, it is essential that the dimension of
14 "quality" be examined and articulated, especially according to the
15 definition of quality as "those capacities and skills that are essential
16 for preparing Californians to live and work constructively in this
17 21st century"; and

18 WHEREAS, Although the dimension of preparation for higher
19 education and workforce development is primarily the
20 responsibility of the state's K-12 schools, their well-being and
21 success are interdependent with our system of higher education,
22 both in what higher education demands in the way of preparation
23 by the state's systems of K-12 education, and because our system
24 of higher education prepares almost all of the educators who will
25 operate our systems of K-12 education; and

26 WHEREAS, It is essential that our system of higher education
27 pay explicit attention to its roles and responsibilities as an effective
28 partner in adequate preparation of students for admission to, and
29 success in, higher education and in the effective preparation of
30 teachers for our systems of K-12 education; and

31 WHEREAS, In addition, more could be done to bring
32 California's concurrent enrollment policy closer to fulfilling its
33 potential as an important tool in meeting the state's educational
34 challenges. Existing concurrent enrollment efforts are tightly
35 focused on college-level and advanced-education opportunities;
36 however, California policies could be altered to promote even
37 greater participation for those who are able to take college-level
38 classes. California would benefit from the creation of more robust
39 local partnerships between high schools and the California
40 Community College system in order to allow and encourage

1 career-technical education opportunities, better shared use of
2 vocational equipment and resources, coursework in basic skills
3 and remediation, high school exit exam preparation, programs
4 targeted at dropout intervention and prevention, instruction in
5 English as a second language, and other opportunities designed to
6 meet the needs of local communities; and

7 WHEREAS, The partnership between K-12 education and higher
8 education should include advancement of rigorous career technical
9 education – especially in both K-12 systems and community
10 colleges, so that students who do not choose to seek a four-year
11 degree may yet gain the benefits of productive careers, helping
12 eliminate the stigma too often attached to those not seeking a
13 four-year degree or graduate study; and

14 WHEREAS, The needs of the new millennium will require a
15 unified career technical education and workforce development
16 system. Moving forward, it is critical that entities such as
17 government, business, labor, community-based organizations, and
18 other education and workforce stakeholders come together to
19 develop a comprehensive approach; and

20 WHEREAS, With respect to effective articulation, coordination,
21 and efficiency, and our state's need for coordination and efficiency
22 in our delivery of higher education with sufficient authority placed
23 in a coordinating body, the people and State of California do not
24 have unlimited resources to fund our system of higher education.
25 Hence it is essential that we have some designated agency with
26 the role, responsibility, and capacity for advising the Legislature
27 and the Governor, the segments of higher education, and the
28 California public with regard to essential coordination and needed
29 efficiency in our delivery of higher education; and

30 WHEREAS, The original Master Plan expected that our three
31 public segments of California's higher education would operate
32 as a system, with prescribed differentiation of functions, yet all
33 collaborating to facilitate and ensure the steady progress of each
34 and every student from preparation through accessibility onto
35 completion; and

36 WHEREAS, The people and State of California do not have the
37 luxury of wasting resources and time in an unnecessarily complex
38 system of articulation among our segments of higher education.
39 Our state needs instead for all stakeholders in our respective
40 segments to come together and adopt an agreed-upon, clear, and

1 effective system of articulation, including a transfer associate
2 degree, and this student-centered approach will help students move
3 more quickly toward their goals; and

4 WHEREAS, With respect to accountability, both fiscal and
5 programmatic, the establishment of statewide goals for California
6 higher education attuned to the public interest of the people and
7 State of California will enable increased accountability across the
8 entire system and within segments. This increased accountability,
9 with increased efficiencies, must be both fiscal and programmatic;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, It is no longer sufficient for our primary focus to
12 be upon getting our students into our system of higher education.
13 Our systems must lead our students systematically and readily to
14 complete their courses of study in a timely manner. Best estimates
15 show that, by 2025, unless we improve our outcomes, we will fall
16 over one million postsecondary degrees short of the number needed
17 for a robust economy in a global marketplace; and

18 WHEREAS, With respect to our state's need for simultaneous
19 commitment to quality higher education, to maintain California's
20 distinction and our capacity to keep California competitive in our
21 now globalized economy, our system must be accountable for
22 results without sacrificing quality; and

23 WHEREAS, With respect to our state's need to close the
24 achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students
25 and communities, our need for an educated populace capable of
26 filling the necessary jobs to maintain a globally competitive
27 economy requires education of disadvantaged communities
28 traditionally underserved. The system must be accountable for
29 closing the achievement gap in ways that do not require or allow
30 restricting access to disadvantaged communities; and

31 WHEREAS, With respect to our state's need for utilizing
32 technology to meet our fiscal and programmatic challenges, as
33 new technologies arise, we must be flexible and open to new
34 methods of higher education delivery and to the use of data systems
35 that both provide information about outcomes and create efficiency
36 in operations; and

37 WHEREAS, Transparency must be increased as part of an
38 accountability system focused on meeting statewide goals. It will
39 help us to find the optimum balance between administrative costs,
40 teaching costs, and other expenses; and

1 WHEREAS, With respect to sufficient financing, the test of our
2 goals, aspirations, commitment and of our capacity to ensure the
3 future well-being of the people and State of California is to be
4 found in the arena of funding, and whether and how we in the
5 California Legislature, together with the Governor and the people
6 of California, prove willing and able to provide the funding
7 essential to our meeting the needs of the California system of
8 higher education; and

9 WHEREAS, With our state's need to establish and articulate
10 the nexus between public investment and public benefit, California
11 needs a sound financing mechanism aligned with statewide goals
12 to ensure that our state's needs are met. In determining the
13 respective funding commitments, a clear nexus must be established
14 between public financing and the economic benefits to the state,
15 so that both the level of public investment and the return on that
16 investment are articulated and verifiable; and

17 WHEREAS, With respect to our state's need for the support of
18 the people of California for the joint committee's public agenda
19 of needs for California higher education, it is essential, as the joint
20 committee files its report with findings and recommendations with
21 respect to the future of California higher education, and does its
22 very best to shepherd its recommendations into enactment and
23 successful implementation, that the importance of a comprehensive
24 strategic action plan for enlisting the active and ardent commitment
25 and support of the people of California be recognized. Toward that
26 end, the joint committee's agenda of needs for higher education
27 must clearly articulate the correlation between public investment
28 and public benefit; and

29 WHEREAS, The Joint Committee on the Master Plan for Higher
30 Education recommends that its existence be extended into the
31 2011–12 Regular Session, until November 30, 2012, to continue
32 the work it has accomplished thus far; now, therefore, be it

33 *Resolved, by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
34 *thereof concurring*, That the Joint Committee on the Master Plan
35 for Higher Education is continued in existence and authorized to
36 act until November 30, 2012, at which time the committee's
37 existence shall terminate; and be it further

38 *Resolved*, That the joint committee shall submit a report on its
39 activities to the Legislature during the 2011–12 Regular Session;
40 and be it further

- 1 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
- 2 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.