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CALIFORNIA STATE ASSEMBLY PASSES RESOLUTION CALLING FOR RENEWED INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

-- California's Elected Leaders Call for a National Campaign to Make Higher Education the Centerpiece of the Country's Economic Recovery--

Sacramento, CA – The state Assembly entered the national debate over the nation's crumbling state universities and colleges Thursday by passing a measure calling for large-scale federal help to rebuild and expand systems of public higher education.

House Resolution (HR) four – which calls for the federal government to invest in colleges and universities in order to put the country back on the road to economic recovery – was passed by the Assembly by a margin of 47 to 19.

The resolution was sponsored by the California Faculty Association (CFA) and authored by Assemblymember Anthony Portantino (D-La Cañada-Flintridge), Chair of the Assembly Higher Education Committee.

Lillian Taiz, President of the California Faculty Association, and a professor of History at CSU Los Angeles, said, "Business and education leaders know we need a skilled workforce to lift our economy out of this mess. Higher Education is a solution for our economy. We have to provide students with affordable and quality higher education opportunities.

"Yet across the country our elected officials in at least 21 states are doing exactly the opposite by hiking tuition and cutting college and university budgets. Today we have taken a step towards reversing this damaging trend," Taiz said.

This resolution originated with CFA members who adopted their own resolution at their Fall delegates meeting on October 19, 2008. That resolution, addressed to state and federal decision-makers, said the rebuilding of the nation's state universities and colleges must begin, especially in tough times, if we ever hope to jump-start the nation's economy. Through HR 4, that message now will be transmitted to national leaders in Washington D.C.

After the passage of the bill, Portantino said, "I am very grateful to the California Faculty Association for highlighting this important state and national issue. As Congress continues to discuss the need for additional federal stimulus, our children's education should be one of the top priorities."

HR 4 represents just a small percentage of the federal money already dedicated to banks and financial institutions. If enacted on the federal level, it could be a catalyst to reinvigorate the economy by creating a highly educated and skilled workforce.

In February, President Obama called on all Americans to commit to at least one year of higher education or career training, arguing that a high school education is no longer adequate in the global economy.

"...I ask every American to commit to at least one year or more of higher education or career training," Obama said last month in his address to Congress. "This can be a community college or a four-year school, vocational training or an apprenticeship. But whatever the training may be, every American will need to get more than a high school diploma."

To learn more about the "New Deal for a New Millennium for Higher Education," go to:
<http://www.calfac.org/newdeal.html>

To view the bill, go to: http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/postquery?bill_number=hr_4&sess=CUR&house=B&author=portantino

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