

## **S25.24.20 - Empowering Student Workers: Advocating for Fair Wages, Rights, and Unions in California Community Colleges**

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**Sponsors:** SSSCC Region VIII, Associated Student Government of Santiago Canyon College

**WHEREAS**, Student workers are essential to campus operations and make up a significant portion of the workforce. Nationally, 80% of community college students work while studying, with 39% working full-time [\[1\]](#), often as their primary income source and despite gaining skills and flexibility, they face systemic inequities such as low wages, inconsistent hours, and lack of workplace protections, highlighting the need for fair treatment and representation;

**WHEREAS**, Many student workers lack fair wages, benefits, and bargaining power, limiting their socioeconomic mobility. While the Strong Workforce Program supports work-based learning, existing policies fail to ensure equitable compensation and protections and AB 323 [\[2\]](#) proposes expanding paid opportunities by 2026, but without advocacy, student workers may continue facing labor exploitation. Strengthening protections and collective representation is essential for economic mobility;

**WHEREAS**, Governor Gavin Newsom, in the proposed 2024-2025 budget [\[3\]](#), has emphasized strengthening equity and advancing workforce development, which includes supporting pathways that empower students to pursue rewarding careers and foster fair labor practices; and

**WHEREAS**, Assembly Bill 1228 (Holden, 2023) [\[4\]](#), championed by Assemblymember Chris Holden, underscores the importance of fair compensation and improved workplace protections,

setting a precedent for advancing equity across labor sectors, including on-campus student employment; additionally, research [5] and practices in other states have demonstrated that student worker unions [6] can lead to significant improvements in wages, benefits, workplace conditions, and opportunities for professional growth—ensuring equity and dignity for all student workers; Now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, That the Student Senate for California Community Colleges advocate for the formation and recognition of student worker unions across all California community colleges to address systemic inequities and ensure fair treatment for student workers and collaborate with the Chancellor’s Office, student worker organizations, and labor rights advocacy groups to provide education and resources to student workers about their rights to organize and unionize;

**RESOLVED**, That the Student Senate for California Community Colleges advocate for the equitable implementation of AB 323 (Fong, Introduced 2025), ensuring that revisions to work-based learning policies include strong labor protections, fair compensation, and direct support for student workers; which by working alongside key stakeholders, the Student Senate aims to address systemic inequities—such as low wages, lack of benefits, and limited bargaining power—while empowering student workers to advocate for their rights and long-term economic mobility;

**RESOLVED**, That Student Senate for California Community Colleges (SSCCC) encourage community college districts to adopt policies supporting student worker unionization and collective bargaining at all institutional levels and, in alignment with Governor Newsom’s 2024-2025 budget priorities, include policies that promote equitable working conditions and labor rights for student workers;

**RESOLVED**, That the Student Senate for California Community Colleges work with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) to develop a statewide plan addressing labor equity, workplace protections, and union representation for student workers, aligning with AB 1228 (Holden, 2023) encourage student worker representation on statewide and regional committees to strengthen labor protections and workplace equity.

**Citations:**

[1]<https://collegecampaign.org/publication/expanding-federal-work-study-opportunities-for-california-community-college-students>

[2][https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202520260AB323#99INT](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB323#99INT)

[3]<https://ebudget.ca.gov/2024-25/pdf/BudgetSummary/HigherEducation.pdf>

[4][https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202320240AB1228](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB1228)

[5]<https://apsanet.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/GS1-Chapter-33.pdf>

[6][https://www.epi.org/publication/graduate-student-employee-unions/#:~:text=Union%2Drepresented%20graduate%20student%20employees.freedom%20\(Rogers%2C%20Eaton%2C%20and](https://www.epi.org/publication/graduate-student-employee-unions/#:~:text=Union%2Drepresented%20graduate%20student%20employees.freedom%20(Rogers%2C%20Eaton%2C%20and)