

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**EARLY COMMITMENT TO COLLEGE PROGRAM TO LAUNCH IN LOS ANGELES UNIFIED
Region's Middle School Students to Benefit from State Promise**

Los Angeles, Calif. – Students in California will be encouraged to think about college early with the passage this fall of the Early Commitment to College bill championed by State Senator Jack Scott. The program will teach students and their parents early, beginning in the sixth grade, how to go to college and how to pay for it.

WHAT: A briefing to announce plans for the newly passed Early Commitment to College program and to celebrate the distinguished legislative career of the Honorable Senator Jack Scott who championed the bill's passage

WHEN: Monday, December 1st, 2008 from 9:30am to 11am

WHERE: Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce – The Bank of America Room
350 S. Bixel Street, Los Angeles, CA 90017

WHO:

- ♦ Former State Senator and Incoming Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott
- ♦ Michele Siqueiros, Executive Director, Campaign for College Opportunity

The program is run out of the California Department of Education (CDE) and is voluntary for California school districts. It will begin this spring in several middle schools across the state and will be offered to all school districts over the coming year. Los Angeles Unified School District, the largest school district in the state with over 700,000 students, will be one of the first districts to participate.

“I am excited to join with the Campaign for College Opportunity and the Los Angeles Unified School District in launching the Early Commitment to College program, says Senator Jack Scott. “Higher education is the key to the future economic well-being of this state. This program will keep the promise made to provide a place in college to every eligible student.”

School districts across the state have been investing in programs geared towards teaching middle schoolers about college, such as “San Francisco Promise”, a partnership between San Francisco Unified School District and San Francisco State University, and “Passport to College”, a partnership between San Joaquin Delta College and local school districts. The Early Commitment to College program will allow the Department of Education to leverage these types of programs into a statewide program, reaching many more students, while still allowing local regions to develop curriculum and partnerships that address their local needs.

“Early Commitment to College is powerful and unique because it packages college and financial aid opportunities into one commitment made to students at an early age,” says Michele Siqueiros, Executive Director of the Campaign for College Opportunity.

Students and their parents or legal guardians will sign the “Save Me a Spot in College” pledge to finish high school, take courses to prepare for college, and complete the FAFSA (federal financial aid application) by March 2nd of their senior year. In return, the state will ensure that there is a spot for every student in one of California’s community colleges or in a CSU or UC if the student meets admission requirements. The state also pledges financial aid for eligible students once they reach college to help pay for fees, books, supplies, and living expenses.

The Campaign for College Opportunity will also be announcing a \$45,000 grant by the Citigroup Foundation to launch the first phase of the Early Commitment to College program.

About the Campaign for College Opportunity: The Campaign for College Opportunity is a broad-based, bipartisan coalition, including business, education and labor leaders, and is dedicated to ensuring the next generation of Californians has the opportunity to go to college, as promised by California's 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education. For more information, visit: www.collegecampaign.org.

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