



March 27, 2025

To: Senate Education K-16 Committee

Re: Public testimony FOR SB 1786

Chairman Creighton, Vice Chair Campbell and Members,

My name is Kelle Kieschnick with the Texas Business Leadership Council, a non-partisan network of business leaders advancing policies to support a more globally competitive Texas and we are proud to support SB 1786.

We currently have a skills gap due to low postsecondary attainment that is putting a strain on our workforce. The committee substitute to SB 1786 supports the “all of the above” approach we need to increase postsecondary attainment. This includes advanced degrees as well as workforce credentials as highlighted by Governor Abbott’s emergency item to expand access to career training opportunities.

We applaud the **expansion of fundable outcomes to include transfers to private 4-year institutions** to reward community colleges for the investments they have made in the success of these students. The workforce needs more students to be on a path to an advanced degree whether it is via a public or private institution.

The committee substitute also provides **more clarity on eligibility for the FAST** program which has been a major success to date with **dual credit participation**

up by 22% statewide. Based on historical trends, this will lead to an increase in students completing postsecondary programs.

The committee substitute also **strengthens the credential of value methodology** by shortening the time period used to calculate ROI and **utilizing the state's self-sustaining wage** as the threshold which **reflects the goals of the Community College Finance Commission to increase access to good-paying jobs.**

Enhanced workforce data collection and **regional workforce assessments will help to better align programs with local labor market demands and empower parents and students** to make more informed decisions about future education and career opportunities.

We commend you Chairman Creighton for your leadership on this bill. It is critical that we continue the momentum created by HB 8 with the steps that **SB 1786** takes to strengthen it, **supporting a more globally competitive Texas.**

Respectfully,

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