

AGENDA ITEM 4.

**APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION REGARDING
FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET**

Submitted for: Action

Summary: Acknowledging the negative impact of the ongoing budget delay on students, schools, and the economic future of the state, this Resolution urges immediate adoption of a state budget for fiscal year 2017 that will provide the necessary funding for students who depend on MAP and other gift assistance programs to attend college, ensure financial stability to community colleges and public universities, and deliver to Illinois public higher education the resources needed to advance the state's economic future.

Action requested: That the Commission approve the Resolution included with this agenda item regarding the fiscal year 2017 budget.



**Illinois Student Assistance Commission Resolution Encouraging Adoption of
Fiscal Year 2017 Budget**

WHEREAS, the *Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success* requires increased college affordability, academic achievement, and college completions by more Illinoisans, and recognizes that to meet workforce demands and achieve economic growth and vitality, Illinois must increase the number of citizens with a postsecondary degree to 60 percent by 2025 (“60 x 2025 Goal”); and

WHEREAS, the data is clear that Illinois cannot reach the 60 x 2025 Goal without significantly increasing college completion among returning adults and the growing population of low income and first generation students, most of whom must rely on financial aid to attend college; and

WHEREAS, more than 125,000 students across the State of Illinois typically rely on Monetary Award Program (MAP) grants to attend college each year, and almost 60% of those students are so low-income that the federal government doesn't consider them able to contribute *any* resources to pay for college; and

WHEREAS, without the availability of MAP grants, many students simply couldn't go to college—reducing both the student's and the state's ability to leverage hundreds of millions of federal Pell dollars; and

WHEREAS, students throughout the state whose financial aid packages included a MAP grant for the 2016-17 school year have not received those awards due to the budget delay; and

WHEREAS, funding for other gift assistance programs for Illinois college students has also been delayed, including funding for the Grant Programs for Dependents of Police, Fire and Correctional Officers killed or disabled in the line of duty, the Minority Teachers of Illinois Scholarship Program, Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois, and other programs; and funding for each of these programs in fiscal year 2016 was dramatically reduced or eliminated, leaving many families with unexpected costs; and

WHEREAS, the ongoing fiscal year 2017 budget delay and the limited funding that was only made available at the very end of fiscal year 2016 have eroded trust that MAP and other gift assistance funding will be available, creating uncertainty and impacting college decision-making for students across the state; and

WHEREAS, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission recognizes that without a current appropriation, many colleges are not able to credit student accounts for MAP and other gift assistance, and that some colleges are holding student Pell refunds as they await payment from the state—refunds that students rely on to pay for books and living expenses; and

WHEREAS, even those colleges that *are* able to credit student accounts for MAP and other gift assistance for the fall semester, with the expectation that they will be reimbursed when funds are appropriated, may not be able to do so in the spring semester; and

WHEREAS, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission is deeply concerned that the ongoing delay in providing funding for MAP and other gift assistance programs has already impacted the ability of many students to continue to attend college and could continue to do so, interrupting their studies and/or increasing student loan debt, reducing their likelihood of completing, impacting their careers, and resulting in long-term economic harm to individual families and the state; and

WHEREAS, the budget delay is threatening the ability of public post-secondary institutions to maintain staffing, programs, and facilities that will educate the Illinois workforce of today and tomorrow; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Illinois Student Assistance Commission strongly urges immediate adoption of a state budget for fiscal year 2017 that will provide the necessary funding for students who depend on MAP and other gift assistance programs to attend college, ensure financial stability to community colleges and public universities, and deliver to Illinois public higher education the resources needed to advance the state's economic future; and be it further

RESOLVED that this Resolution shall be forwarded to the Governor, the members of the General Assembly and the leadership of the higher education community.

Approved by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission

December 1, 2016