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UNITE-LA ELEVATES NEED TO INVEST IN AND PROTECT CRADLE-THROUGH-CAREER PRIORITIES IN GOV. NEWSOM'S FINAL BUDGET PROPOSAL

Los Angeles, CA (January 2026) – Following Gov. Gavin Newsom's release of his final state budget proposal, UNITE-LA recognizes the administration's continued commitment to strengthening California's education and workforce systems. While the state navigates a complex fiscal landscape, it is imperative that California reinforces a vision where education and workforce development are treated as essential drivers of our state's economic strength.

UNITE-LA joins the governor in recognizing the significant progress made on cradle-through-career investments during his tenure. The launch of initiatives such as the Regional K–16 Education Collaborative Grant Program and the expansion of Transitional Kindergarten, and historic investments in child care, TK–12 and higher education have strengthened the infrastructure needed to support students, families and communities while advancing alignment across education and workforce systems. UNITE-LA thanks Gov. Newsom for his sustained leadership and commitment to policies that promote opportunity, equity and economic mobility for California's families.

In the governor's 2026–27 budget proposal, UNITE-LA welcomes targeted investments to rebuild and strengthen the infrastructure of child care providers and local educational agencies (LEAs) impacted by the 2025 Los Angeles wildfires, along with continued, significant investments in community schools. We also appreciate additional funding to expand high school career pathways through dual enrollment, apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, and career technical education at community colleges.

As a longtime champion of education systems change to better serve students and the state's rising workforce, UNITE-LA looks forward to reviewing details of the governor's proposal to transfer management oversight of the California Department of Education to the State Board of Education.

Simultaneously, California is navigating a challenging fiscal environment, shaped not only by state-level budget pressures but also by a shifting federal landscape, including the implementation of H.R. 1 and ongoing threats to critical social safety net programs, such as child care and health care. Moments like this underscore the importance of protecting—and continuing to invest in—the systems that underpin California's long-term economic vitality and shared prosperity.

"Our people are California's greatest economic asset," said Alysia Bell, president of UNITE-LA. "We appreciate the governor's efforts to protect historic cradle-through-career investments while delivering a balanced budget. To fully realize the promise of these investments, we must also

ensure long-term, sustainable funding that supports our rising workforce. Investing in students and educators today is essential to securing a prosperous and equitable future for all Californians.”

UNITE-LA urges the governor and state legislature to sustain and advance investments that grow the supply of child care spaces and move towards reimbursement models that reflect the true cost of care; protect and support immigrant communities; and strengthen education and workforce system alignment through initiatives such as the Regional K–16 Education Collaborative, the higher education interagency council and equitable access to broadband. Continued and strategic investments in these areas are essential to ensuring access to high-quality early care, education and workforce pathways for Californians across the state.

As an intermediary committed to promoting economic mobility by dismantling systemic barriers, UNITE-LA looks forward to partnering with the governor and the state legislature to ensure this budget is a catalyst for economic mobility and regional vitality.

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About UNITE-LA

Over the past 27 years, UNITE-LA has been a trusted business intermediary, dedicated to supporting the development of an effective local public education system, so that all children and youth succeed in college, career and beyond. Through the intersection of programming, policy, and systems change efforts, UNITE-LA works to increase access to high-quality early childhood education, develop career pathways in high-growth industries, improve college access and success, and ensure workforce readiness, especially for individuals with high barriers into the workforce. Visit www.unitela.com.