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March 14, 2017

The Honorable Patrick O'Donnell
Chair, Assembly Education Committee
1020 N Street, Room 159
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: AB 410 (Cervantes) – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member O'Donnell:

Public Advocates supports AB 410 (Cervantes), the proposal to prohibit Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) from requiring teachers to pay a fee to participate in a state-mandated beginning teacher induction program.

Public Advocates is a civil rights legal organization that has served as a key voice for educational equity in landmark cases such as *Serrano v. Priest* and *Williams v. California*. In the *Williams* lawsuit, we complained that thousands of students were denied equal educational opportunity because their teachers were not fully credentialed, not properly assigned to the courses they were authorized to teach, or were not authorized to teach English Learners. As part of the settlement agreement, the state set a minimum standard in legislation to be applied statewide and this standard is now one of the state's priorities which districts must address in their Local Control Accountability Plans. Our commitment to "making rights real" has shaped our vision of building an education system that prepares all students for college and careers. At the forefront of this work are community-wide efforts to advocate for education policies that reflect the needs and voices of students.

As recent research by the Learning Policy Institute has made clear, California's education system is facing a severe teacher shortage, a trend characterized by steadily declining enrollment in educator preparation programs and growing turnover rates. In a report by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), it was found that the California Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA), an induction program required for fully-credentialed teachers, has a demonstrably significant positive impact on teacher retention, quality, and success. However, with the high cost associated with teacher certification, beginning educators are facing substantial barriers that can disincentivize them from staying in the profession. Despite being a prerequisite for obtaining a full teaching credential, the

completion of a certified induction program is often associated with a fee that teachers must pay. According to the CTC, it is estimated that at least 12% of providers of the BTSA Program are charging participants upwards of \$3,350 to complete the induction process. Given that teacher turnover and low rates of enrollment in educator programs remain leading contributors to teacher shortage, removing the financial burden of state-mandated induction programs will help recruit committed educators that California schools desperately need.

For these reasons, we support AB 410. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about our position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Liz Guillen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Liz Guillen
Director of Legislative & Community Affairs
(916) 803-5595 (cell)

Cc: Assembly Education Committee
Assembly Member Sabrina Cervantes
Tia Nguyen