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**AJR-2 The federal Pell Grant Program awards.** (2019-2020)

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**Assembly Joint Resolution No. 2**

**CHAPTER 98**

Relative to the federal Pell Grant Program.

[ Filed with Secretary of State June 25, 2019. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AJR 2, Voepel. The federal Pell Grant Program awards.

Existing federal law establishes the federal Pell Grant Program under Title IV of the federal Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide need-based grant awards to low-income students in order to promote access to postsecondary education.

This measure would respectfully request the Congress and the President of the United States to immediately take action to increase the maximum annual amount of the federal Pell Grant Program award from \$6,195 to at least \$7,500 to further help low-income college students alleviate the burden of postsecondary education debt.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, As postsecondary education costs for students have increased over the years, it has become more financially burdensome for students to attend postsecondary educational institutions; and

WHEREAS, United States employers require job applicants to receive advanced education degrees or credentials more often than they did in the past; and

WHEREAS, The federal Pell Grant Program is a vital aid to financially needy students to help pay for their college educations; and

WHEREAS, In the 2018–19 academic year, more than 700,000 students attending postsecondary educational institutions in California are receiving Pell Grant Program awards that total over \$4,000,000,000; and

WHEREAS, While the growth in the amount of the maximum annual Pell Grant Program award, which is currently \$6,195, has kept pace with inflation since the 1976–77 academic year, the first year in which undergraduates in all class years became eligible for these grants, the increase has not kept pace with escalating college costs; and

WHEREAS, For example, 20 years ago, the maximum Pell Grant Program award covered almost 23 percent of the average total costs of attending the University of California, while the current maximum only covers about 18 percent of those costs, and would have to be increased to almost \$7,500 to cover the same portion of total costs of attendance at the university that were covered 20 years ago; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature respectfully requests the Congress and the President of the United States to immediately take action to increase the maximum annual amount of the federal Pell Grant Program award from \$6,195 to at least \$7,500 to further help low-income college students alleviate the burden of higher education debt; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States, and to the author for appropriate distribution.