

COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE (CCB): MYTH BUSTERS

HB3717/SB2482

MYTH

The College will have to raise property taxes

FACT

- Community Colleges frequently develop and **implement new high cost career and technical education programs, without raising taxes.**
- In other states, such as Michigan, evaluations found **no significant increase in state costs** after authorizing community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees.
- CCBs rely on grants, tuition, employer partnerships, and **existing infrastructure.**
- **State law caps property tax rates** and generally requires a public process for increases over 5%. Some community college districts have individually capped property tax levy authority that can only be approved by voters in the district.

MYTH

The Community College Baccalaureate poaches students from universities

FACT

- A Florida study found CCB programs **did not reduce public university enrollment or bachelor's degree completions.** ⁱ
- Of the 24 states that authorize CCBs, **CCB degrees account for a small fraction of all baccalaureate degrees conferred.** In 13 states, they account for less than 1% and in 9 states they account for between 1-4%. Only Florida is higher, at 9%. ⁱⁱ
- **CCB degrees are for high need / high demand pathways in a local district or region where there is an unmet workforce need.** These degrees help address a community's workforce shortages by bringing accessible, lower cost programs to students who are unlikely to go on to earn a baccalaureate degree without a local option.
- **Fourteen community colleges are located in baccalaureate degree deserts** in Illinois, where the community college is the only viable option for place bound working adults. ⁱⁱⁱ

MYTH

Tuition will be high for these programs

FACT

- The proposed legislation **limits tuition and fees to 150%** of current community college tuition and fees, for associate degree programs.
- Community colleges **conduct rigorous cost analyses** before implementing programs in their district to ensure they have adequate resources to implement the program.
- This **cost analysis will be required as part of the program approval process,** by both the ICCB and the IBHE.

MYTH

Colleges do not have the qualified faculty

FACT

- Illinois Community Colleges are accredited by the Higher Learning Commission just like public and private universities and will have to **meet the same high standards to establish new 4-year programs.**
- Colleges **employ highly qualified and professional faculty,** many of whom possess terminal degrees.
- Colleges can **leverage existing program infrastructure** to launch CCBs, using qualified faculty already in place. ^{iv}

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MYTH

**Community
Colleges have no
restrictions on
what they can
offer for the CCB**

FACT

- Community colleges in Illinois follow a rigorous, evidence-based approval process when developing new programs. Built upon this foundation, **an extra rigorous process, that includes both ICCB and IBHE is spelled out in the proposed legislation.**
- Every community college that proposes a CCB will be required to meet high standards that require them to **demonstrate workforce need, employer support, consideration of what is already offered across local and regional employment and training providers—including universities,** and evidence that they are not engaging in unwarranted duplication.
- They also are required to meet **all regional and programmatic accreditation standards,** just as any four-year program would be required to do at the university level.
- Stakeholders are actively negotiating legislative language to **establish a cap on the number of programs that can be created.**

MYTH

**There is no real
demand for CCB
graduates**

FACT

- **CCB programs fill workforce shortages in high-demand fields,** creating career opportunities while helping local talent stay in their communities, earn a living wage, and drive economic growth.
- **Healthcare and manufacturing employers in Illinois have expressed a strong need for qualified candidates with baccalaureate degrees** in their respective industries, supporting CCB programs as a solution to bridge this gap. ^v
- Studies in Florida and Washington show 3 in 4 CCB grads match to a career in their field of study within four terms of study, with the **Washington group outmatching their university counterparts by six percent.** ^{vi}

ⁱ Bragg, D. D., & Harmon, T. (2023). *Twenty Frequently Asked Questions about Community College Baccalaureate (CCB) Degrees in Illinois*. Springfield, IL: Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA).

ⁱⁱ This is derived from IPEDS data.

ⁱⁱⁱ Bragg, D. (2024). *Geographic Access to Bachelor's Degrees in Illinois*. Presentation to the Illinois Community College Trustees Association Advisory Committee on the CCB. Replicates the methodology of: Hillman, N., & Weichman, T. (2016). *Education deserts: The continued significance of "place" in the twenty-first century*. <https://www.acenet.edu/documents/education-deserts-the-continued-significance-of-place-in-the-twenty-first-century.pdf>

^{iv} Bragg, D. D., & Harmon, T. (2024). *Twenty Frequently Asked Questions about Community College Baccalaureate (CCB) Degrees*. Community College Baccalaureate Association (CCBA).

^v Harmon, T. (2024). *Focus Groups with Employers and Workforce Stakeholders for CCB*. Illinois Community College Trustees Association.

^{vi} Bragg, D. & Meza, E. (2020). *Comparison of the Employment and Earnings Outcomes of Washington Community College Baccalaureate Graduates and University Graduates*. University of Washington.