



CALIFORNIA STATE TREASURER JOHN CHIANG

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **State Treasurer John Chiang Commends USC MPA Students for Contributions to California ABLE Act Board**

**SACRAMENTO** – State Treasurer John Chiang is applauding students in the Master of Public Administration program at University of Southern California (USC) Price School of Public Policy for their work on a class project examining the development of CalABLE, a new program that allows people with disabilities to open tax-free savings accounts without fear of losing vital public benefits.

The project was part of a capstone course that gives students an opportunity to integrate and to practice the skills they have learned from their many MPA courses. Typically, student projects are focused on a single policy or management issue facing an agency or jurisdiction. This year's class, however, was presented with the unique opportunity to work in all areas of the California ABLE Act Board, a new state agency tasked with implementing the CalABLE Program.

Working with the Board's Executive Director, Christina Elliott, the class identified a number of questions related to program governance, program finances, and communications with stakeholders, including potential applicants for the program. Students then undertook a study of federal and state policy provisions that guide the program, conducted research into other states' efforts to implement ABLE accounts, and identified factors that would support the growth of the program. The class made an oral presentation to Director Elliott and provided her and her staff a full report of their findings.

"I had originally approached USC Price with hopes of finding an intern to help us with the launch of this program," Elliott said. "I could never have imagined the outcome that came to fruition. The work product provided by these graduate students not only helps us improve the CalABLE program today, but will have long lasting impacts on program development now and well into the future."

The class presented to the California ABLE Act Board at its recent meeting. Treasurer Chiang presented each student who worked on the project a Treasury Resolution thanking them for their contributions.

“On behalf of the CalABLE Board, I want to thank the USC students who participated in the Capstone Course,” said Treasurer Chiang. “They came up with exciting and innovative recommendations. Their ideas will help the board better serve people with disabilities who open CalABLE Accounts.”

Professor Robert Denhardt, the faculty sponsor of the class project, noted that the experience proved to be both an excellent learning opportunity for the students and a significant contribution to a new state agency.

“By working across the depth and breadth of one particular program, students were given a glimpse into the complexity of state government and also a special understanding of the relationship between state agencies and the citizens of California,” Denhardt said.

USC Price School Dean Jack Knott added, “We remain committed to working with state government in California and to achieving the mutually beneficial outcomes that can occur with this kind of partnership.”

For more information on CalABLE visit the State Treasurer’s website at:

<http://treasurer.ca.gov/ABLE/>

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