The Red, White, and Blue of Community College Baccalaureate Conferring States

This brief shows bipartisan support for community college baccalaureate (CCB) degrees based on voting patterns in the 2020 presidential election and gubernatorial support for the adoption of CCB policies across the nation's 24 CCB-conferring states.

At a time when almost everything in the country seems to tilt either to the right or the left, community college baccalaureate (CCB) degrees are a notable exception. Figure 1 shows the 24 states identified by the Community College Baccalaureate Association (CCBA) <u>national inventory</u> as authorized to confer CCB degrees, with 12 states colored blue and 12 colored red. This map represents the results of the 2020 presidential contest, with 12 blue states electing President Biden and 12 red states supporting former President Trump.

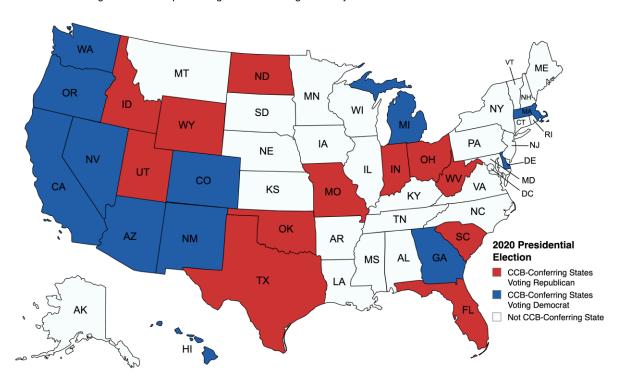


Figure 1. U.S. Map Showing CCB-Conferring States by 2020 Presidential Election Results 1,2

Digging deeper, we found CCB degrees have received support historically from both parties. For example, at the time CCB degrees were first authorized by the 24 states, governors of both parties led a sizeable number of CCB-conferring states (Table 1). While not quite the 50/50 split we saw in the 2020 presidential election, 14 states had Republican governors and 10 states had Democratic governors when CCB-authorizing policy was first adopted. Comparing each governor's party affiliation to the 2020 presidential election results, the governors of 16 states were from the same party at the time of CCB authorization as the 2020 election, while the governor of eight states came from different parties at these two points in time. Importantly, once the CCB legislation passed, there have been no reports of a

¹ National Governors Association, Former Governors, NGA Archive.

² Federal Election Commission, Official 2020 Presidential General Election Results

weakening of support when the governing party has changed. Plus, we've seen CCB policy expand in recent years in states with governors from both parties. These include the lifting of CCB pilots in California under Governor Gavin Newsom (D), bills authorizing community college bachelor of science in nursing degrees in Ohio under Governor Mike DeWine (R) and Oregon under Katherine Brown (D), and most recently, state policy expanding CCB degrees to three of four community colleges under Idaho's Governor Brad Little (R).

Table 1. Twenty-four States by Year of First CCB Law, Governor's Party at the Time First CCB Law Was Adopted, and 2020 Presidential Election Winner

CCB States	Year First CCB Law Adopted	Governor's Party When First CCB Law Was Adopted	2020 Presidential Election Winner
West Virginia	1989		
Idaho	1995		
Georgia	1997		
Nevada	1999		
Florida	2001		
Indiana	2004		
New Mexico	2004		
Oklahoma	2004		
Texas	2004		
Washington	2005		
North Dakota	2006		
Hawaii	2007		
Colorado	2012		
Michigan	2012		
Utah	2012		
California	2015		
Delaware	2017		
Massachusetts	2017		
Missouri	2018		
Ohio	2018		
South Carolina	2018		
Oregon	2019		
Wyoming	2019		
Arizona	2021		

Considering the divisive political debate over higher education playing out today, it is important to highlight the unheralded contributions of community colleges, such as those involved in authorizing CCB degrees. Lynn Pasquarella, president of the American Association of Colleges and Universities, tells Inside Higher Education: "[T]he real transformative power of higher education in America has always been at public institutions, at community colleges in particular, that have not only admitted but positioned students for success in work, citizenship and life." Though this statement did not focus on CCB degrees, we concur that community colleges play a critical role in preparing graduates for employment and citizenship. For meaningful examples of how the nation could approach improvements to higher education in a bipartisan way, the nation needs not look farther than the actions taken by governors of both parties to lead their state's adoption of CCB degrees.

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