

# High School FAFSA Completions: Trends and Implications

Presentation to the CSAC

*March 10, 2022*

# HI!

# I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE!



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CA Student Aid Commission

March 10, 2022

# TODAY'S GOALS

1. **Discuss** NCAN's recent "Pell on the Table" research
2. **Explore** state-level FAFSA completion outcomes for high school seniors in the 2022-23 award cycle
3. **Leave time** for plenty of Q&A

# NCAN: WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO

NCAN PURSUES ITS MISSION BY BUILDING NETWORK CAPACITY, ADVOCATING FOR POLICY SOLUTIONS, AND SUPPORTING SYSTEMS CHANGE

## Build network capacity

**Bolster** the **skills and competencies** of college access and success **leaders and practitioners** through **professional development, news from the field, data, and tools.**

## Advocate for policy solutions

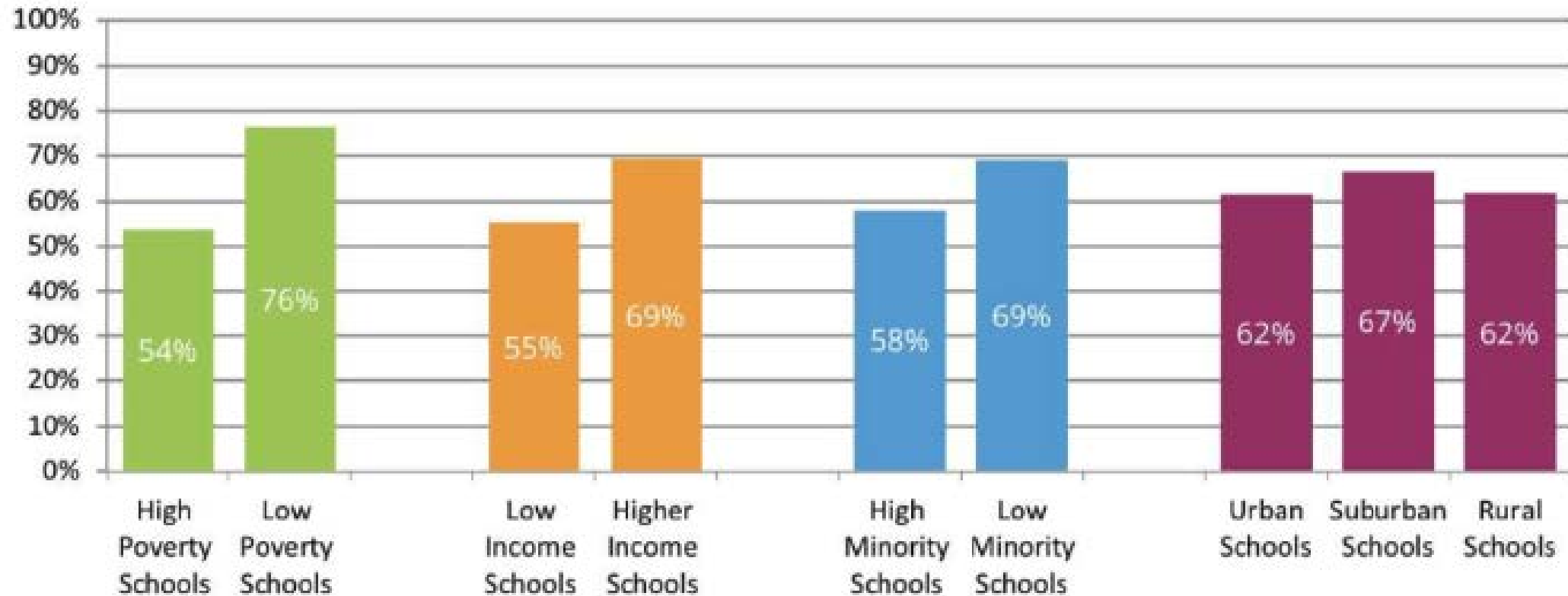
**Advocate** for equitable college completion rates by amplifying a range of **policy solutions, mobilizing members, and leveraging student voice.**

## Support systems change

**Help** school districts, higher education institutions, and other community stakeholders to **adopt effective strategies for students.**

# TALENT IS EVERYWHERE, BUT OPPORTUNITY IS NOT

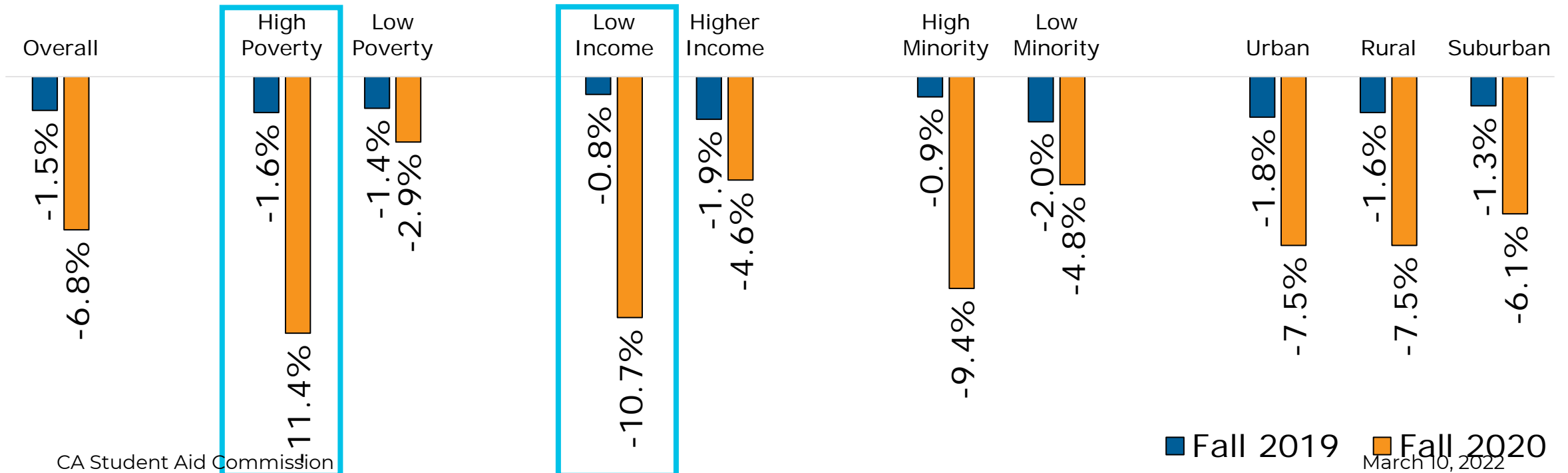
**Figure A. College Enrollment Rates in the First Fall after High School Graduation, Class of 2018, Public Non-Charter Schools**



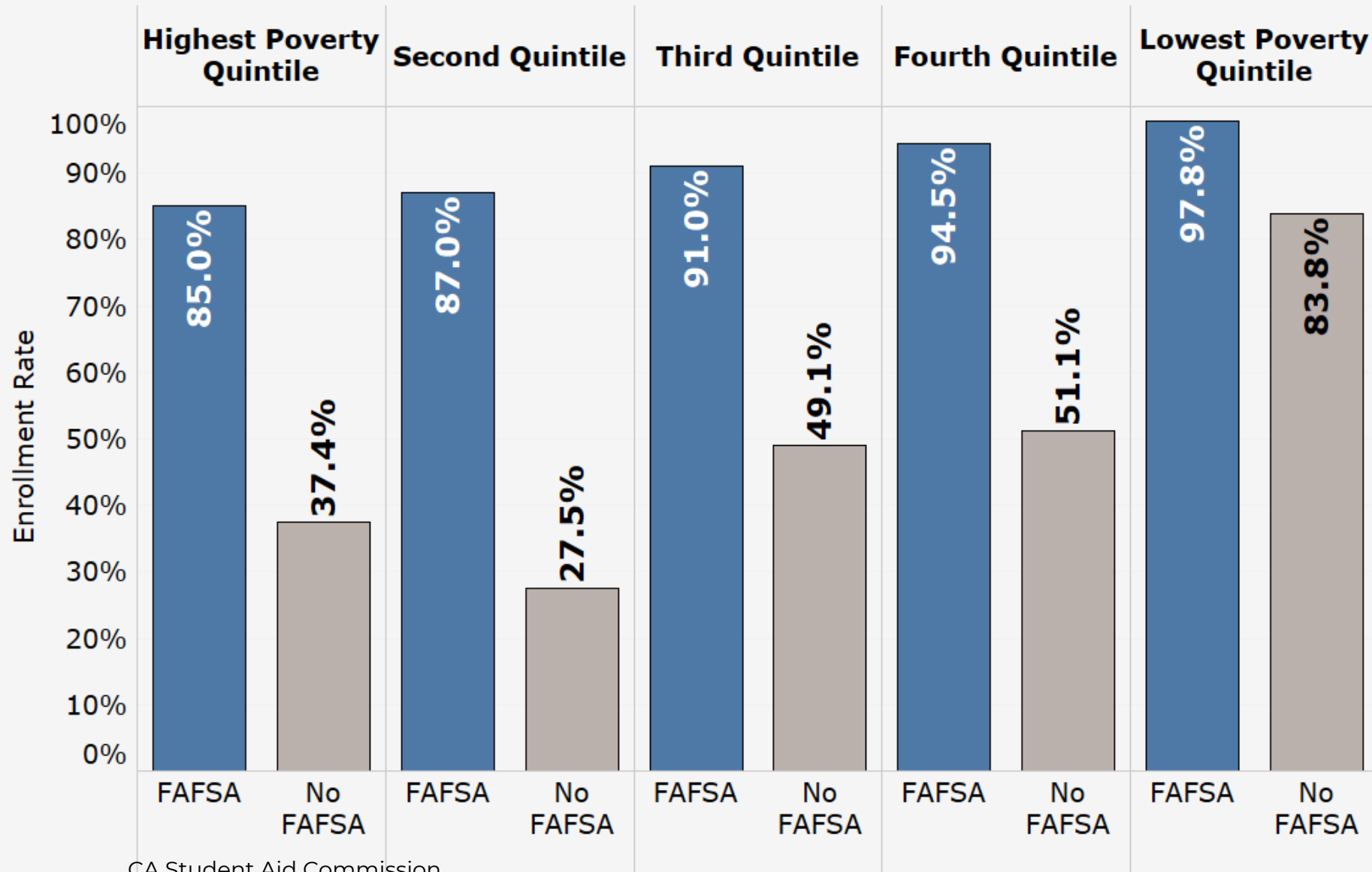
## THAT'S ESPECIALLY TRUE IN THE AGE OF COVID

The high school class of 2020's immediate **fall postsecondary enrollment fell nearly 7%**, but declines were inequitable. High schools with more students of color and students from low-income backgrounds saw larger decreases.

**Percent Change in Immediate Fall Enrollments by High School Characteristics, Classes of 2019 and 2020**



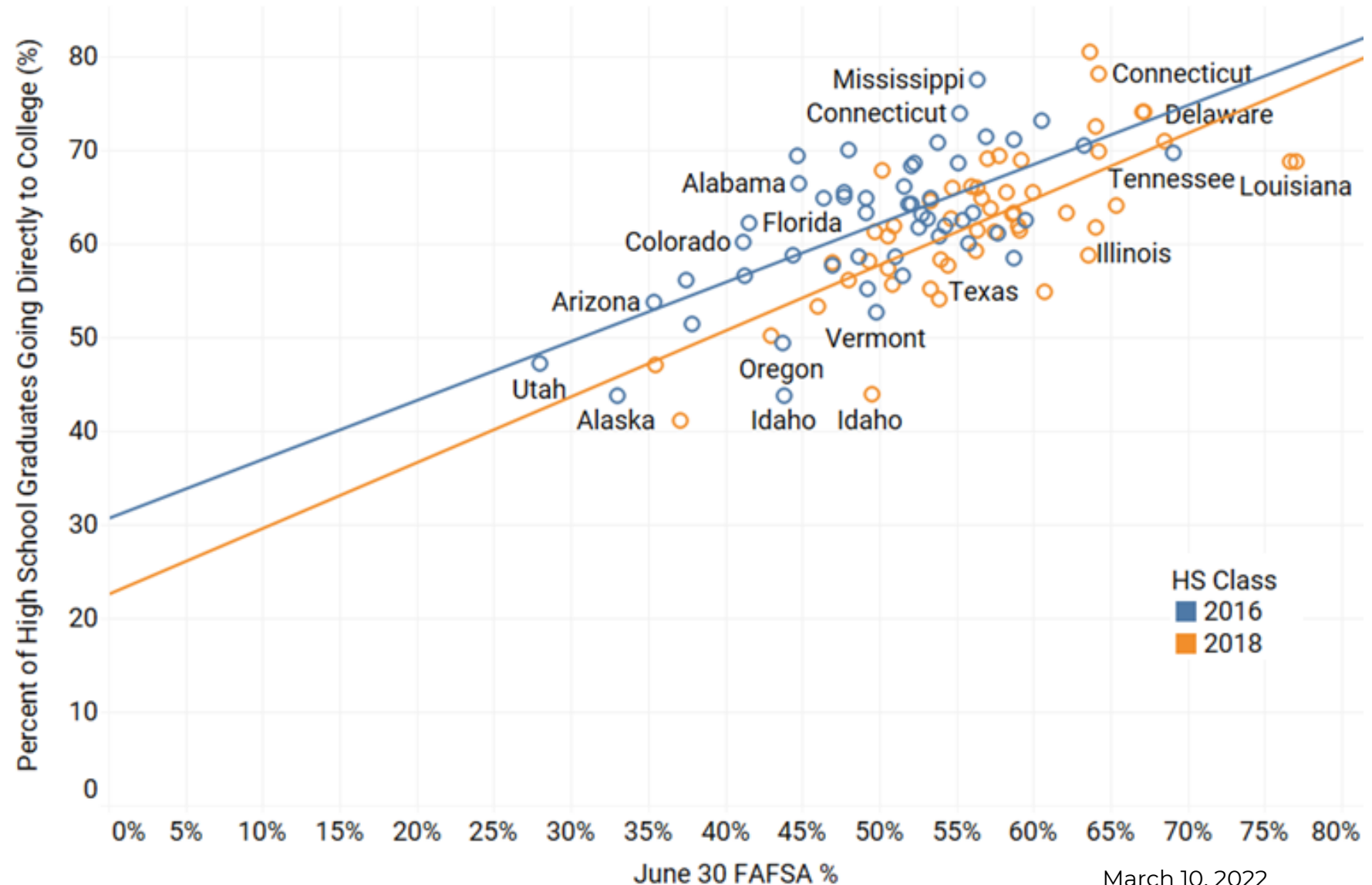
## Immediate college enrollment following high school graduation, by percentile of district poverty and FAFSA completion status.



WHY  
FAFSA  
COMPLETION  
MATTERS  
SO  
MUCH

# WHY FAFSA COMPLETION MATTERS SO MUCH

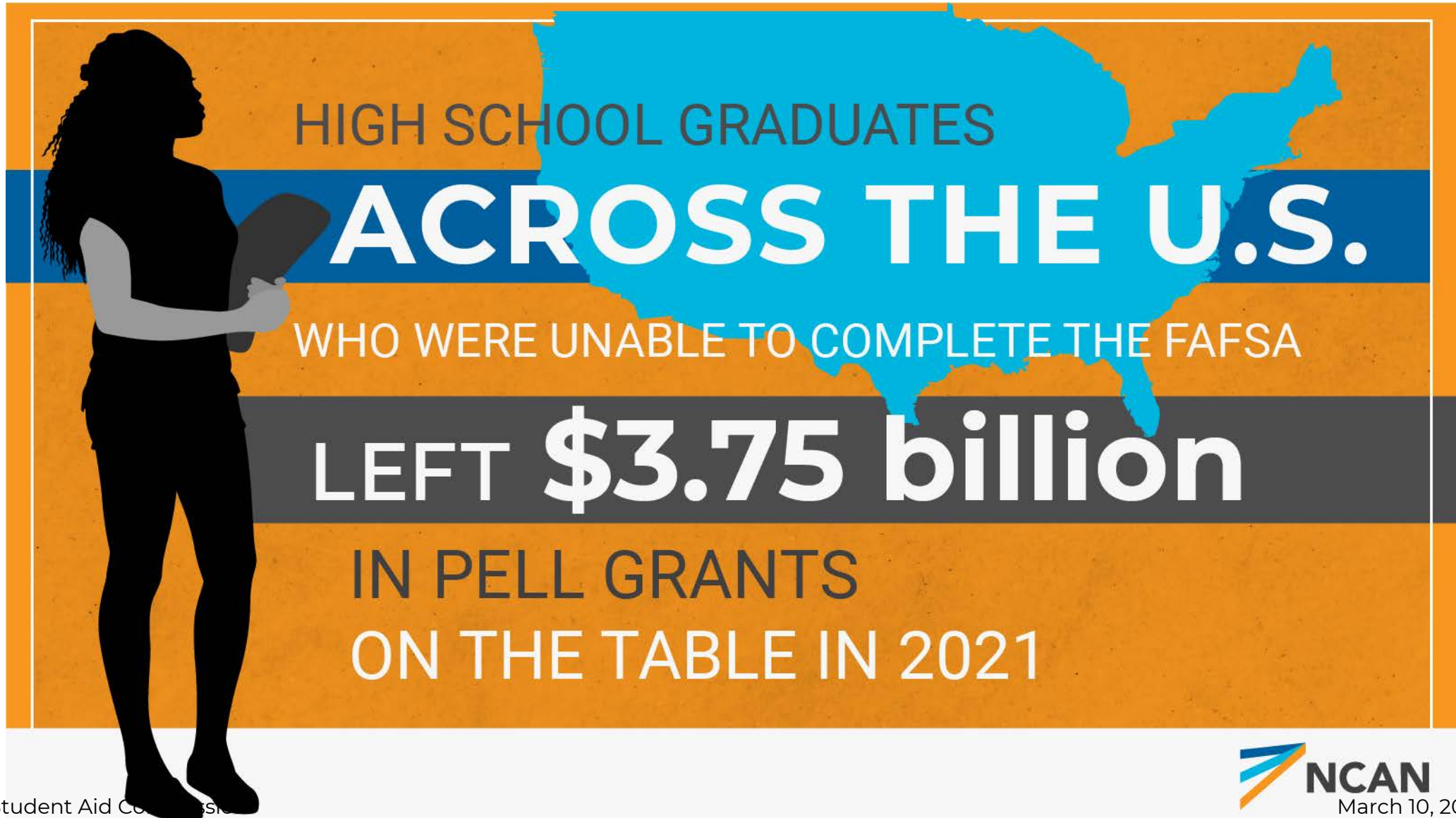
**FAFSA Completion by June and Immediate College Enrollment, High School Classes of 2016 and 2018**



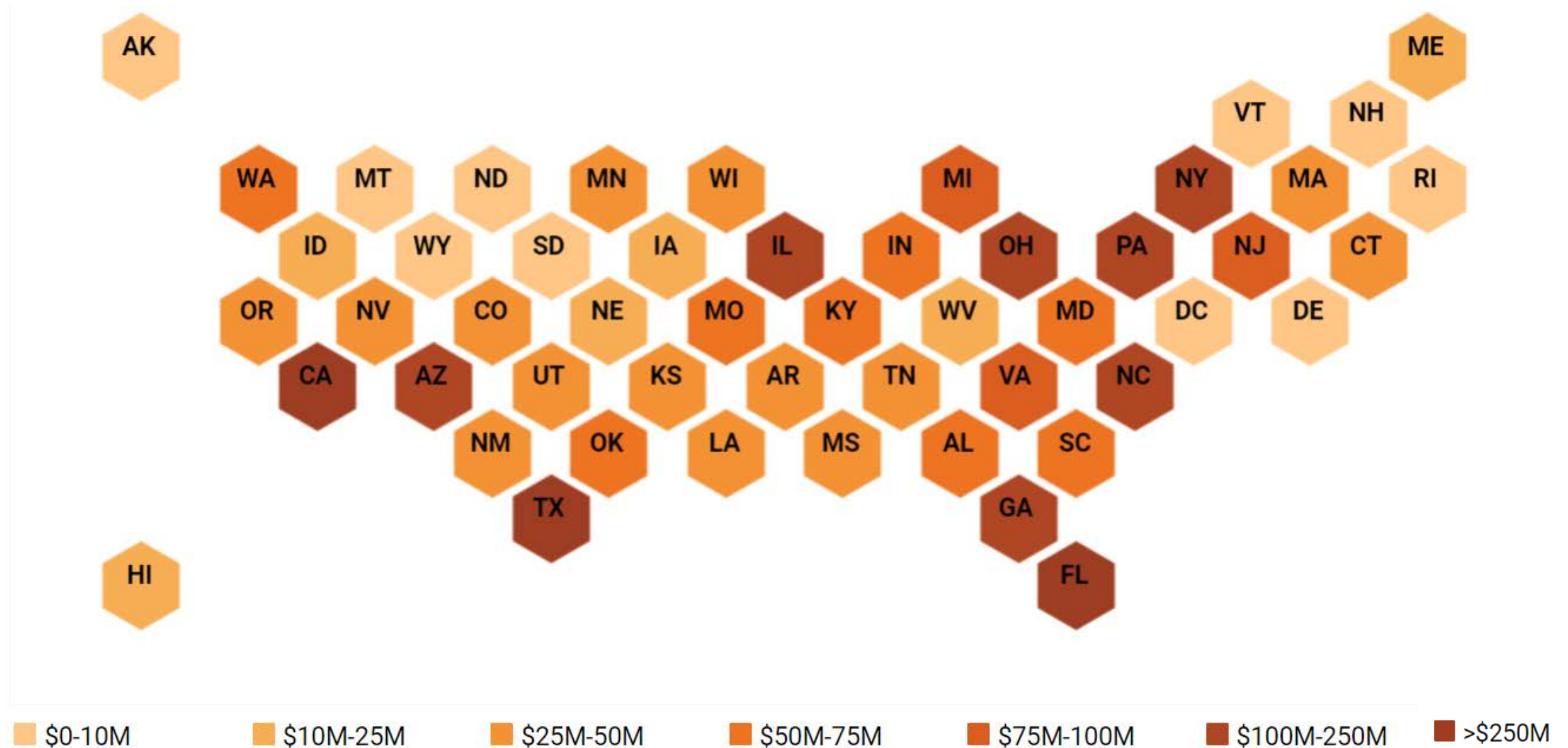
# FAFSA COMPLETION IS THE CANARY IN THE COAL MINE

High School Class	National FAFSA Completion Rate	Year-Over-Year FAFSA % Change	National First Fall Enrollment Rate
2018	57.2%	+1.9%	61.2%
2019	57.0%	-0.5%	60.5%
2020	55.6%	-3.7%	56.5%
2021	53.3%	-4.8%	???

...AND IT'S COSTING STATES (AND STUDENTS) MONEY





# CLASS OF 2021 PELL GRANT DOLLARS LEFT ON THE TABLE



## NCAN'S PELL DOLLARS LEFT ON THE TABLE BRIEF

- Updates 2017 NerdWallet analysis
- NerdWallet estimated that the class of 2018 left behind \$2.3 billion in Pell Grant funding
- Unclaimed Pell Grant dollars increased 60% between the classes of 2017 and 2021
- Two hypotheses/contributing factors to this jump:
  - The maximum Pell Grant increased from \$5,920 to \$6,345
  - FAFSA completion declined from 61% of graduates to 54% of graduates

A black silhouette of a person, likely a student, standing and holding a white sheet of paper. The figure is positioned on the left side of the graphic.A light blue outline map of the state of California, positioned in the upper right corner of the graphic.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES  
IN **CALIFORNIA**  
WHO WERE UNABLE TO COMPLETE THE FAFSA  
**LEFT \$561 million**  
IN PELL GRANTS  
ON THE TABLE IN 2021

## PELL ON THE TABLE: IMPLICATIONS FOR CALIFORNIA

- California's class of 2021 left ~\$561 million in Pell Grants on the table
  - This is about 15% of the total amount nationally and the largest amount overall
- 54% of California's FAFSA applicants are Pell Grant eligible
- The average Pell Grant award for California high school graduates was \$4,755
- 44% of high school graduates did not complete the FAFSA

# WHAT CAN STATES DO?

- FAFSA Challenges
- FAFSA Data Sharing
- Universal FAFSA Policies
- Encourage the Use of ESSER Funding for College and Career Readiness

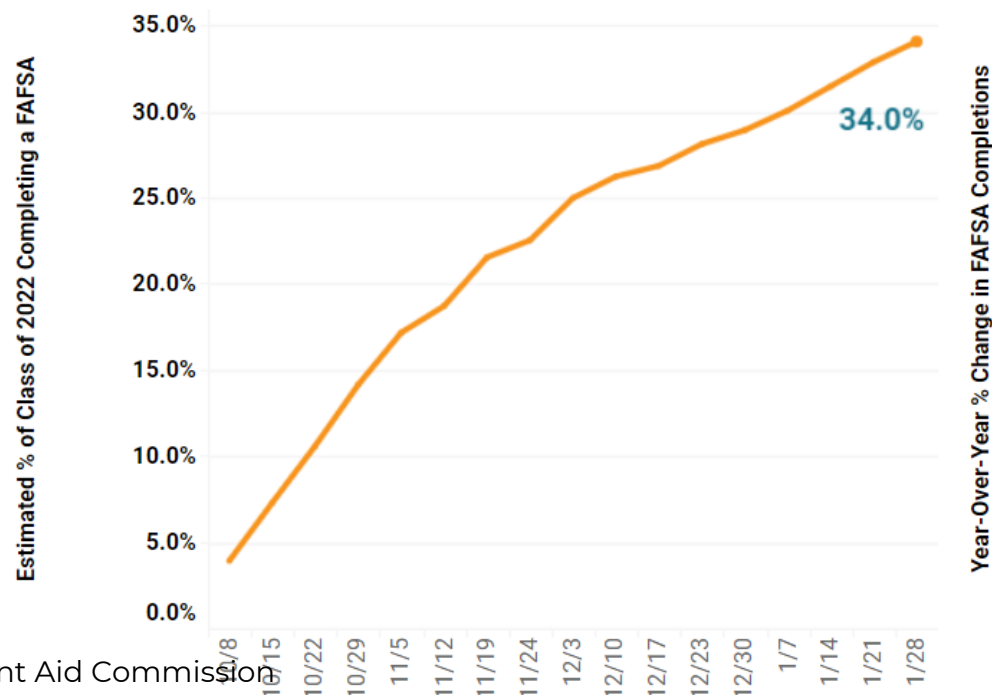
# NCAN'S FORM YOUR FUTURE FAFSA TRACKER

- Updated weekly
- Data at the national, state, city, district, and school levels
- Tracks absolute and relative performance
- Draws on public and private high school data released from Federal Student Aid

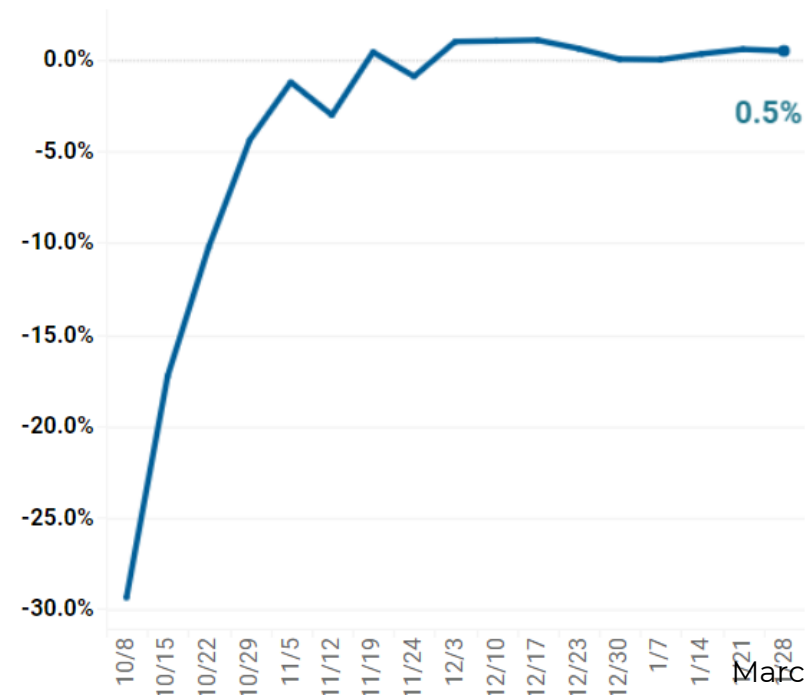


Through **January 28, 2022**, **34.0%** of the high school class of 2022 has completed a FAFSA. There have been **1,375,277** completions nationally, a **0.5%** change compared to last academic year.

Estimated Percent of Seniors Completing a FAFSA



Year-Over-Year % Change in FAFSA Completions



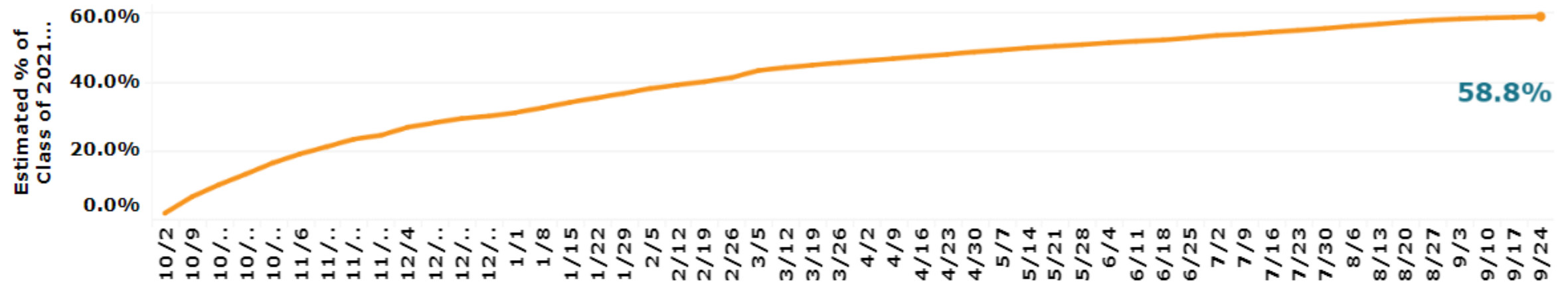
## TWO METRICS WILL APPEAR AGAIN AND AGAIN TODAY

- **% Change Year-Over-Year:** A measure of *relative* progress showing how different the number of completions in this cycle (HS class of 2022) is from the number of completions from the previous cycle (HS class of 2021) through the same date. *Source: FSA data*
- **% of Seniors Completing:** A measure of *absolute* progress showing the estimated % of the class of 2022 has completed a FAFSA through a given date. *Source: FSA data (completions); WICHE (12<sup>th</sup> grade enrollments)*

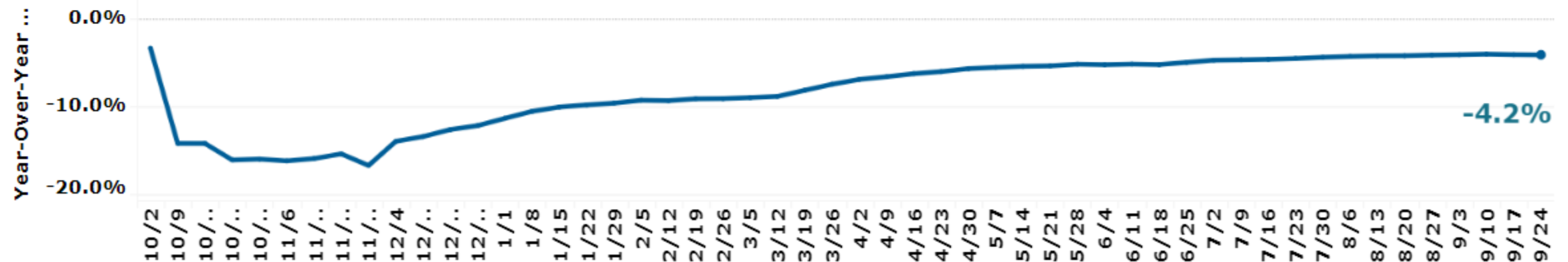
# QUICK RECAP: HOW WE GOT HERE

# FAFSA COMPLETION FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2021

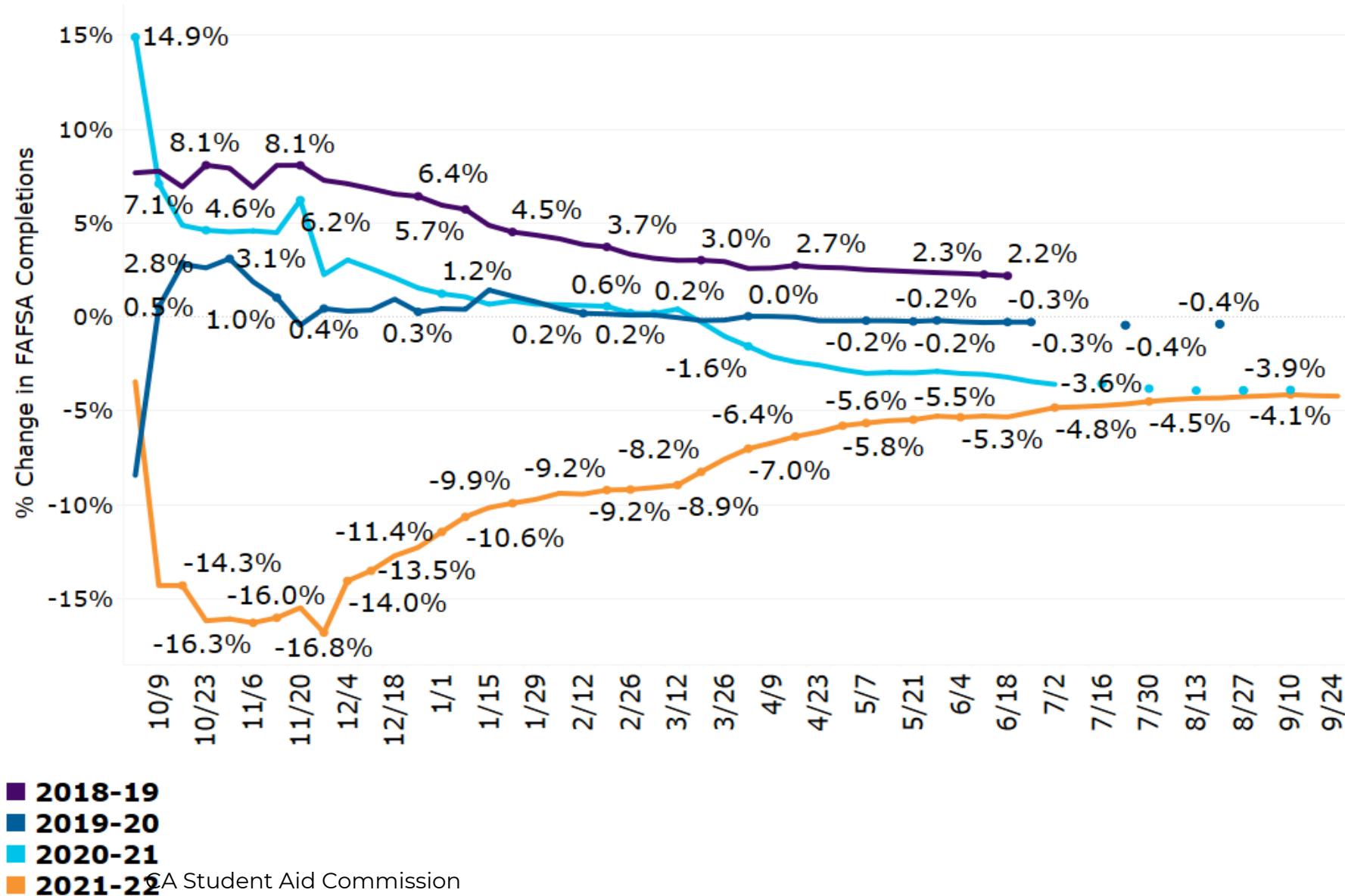
## Estimated Percent of Seniors Completing a FAFSA



## Year-Over-Year % Change in FAFSA Completions

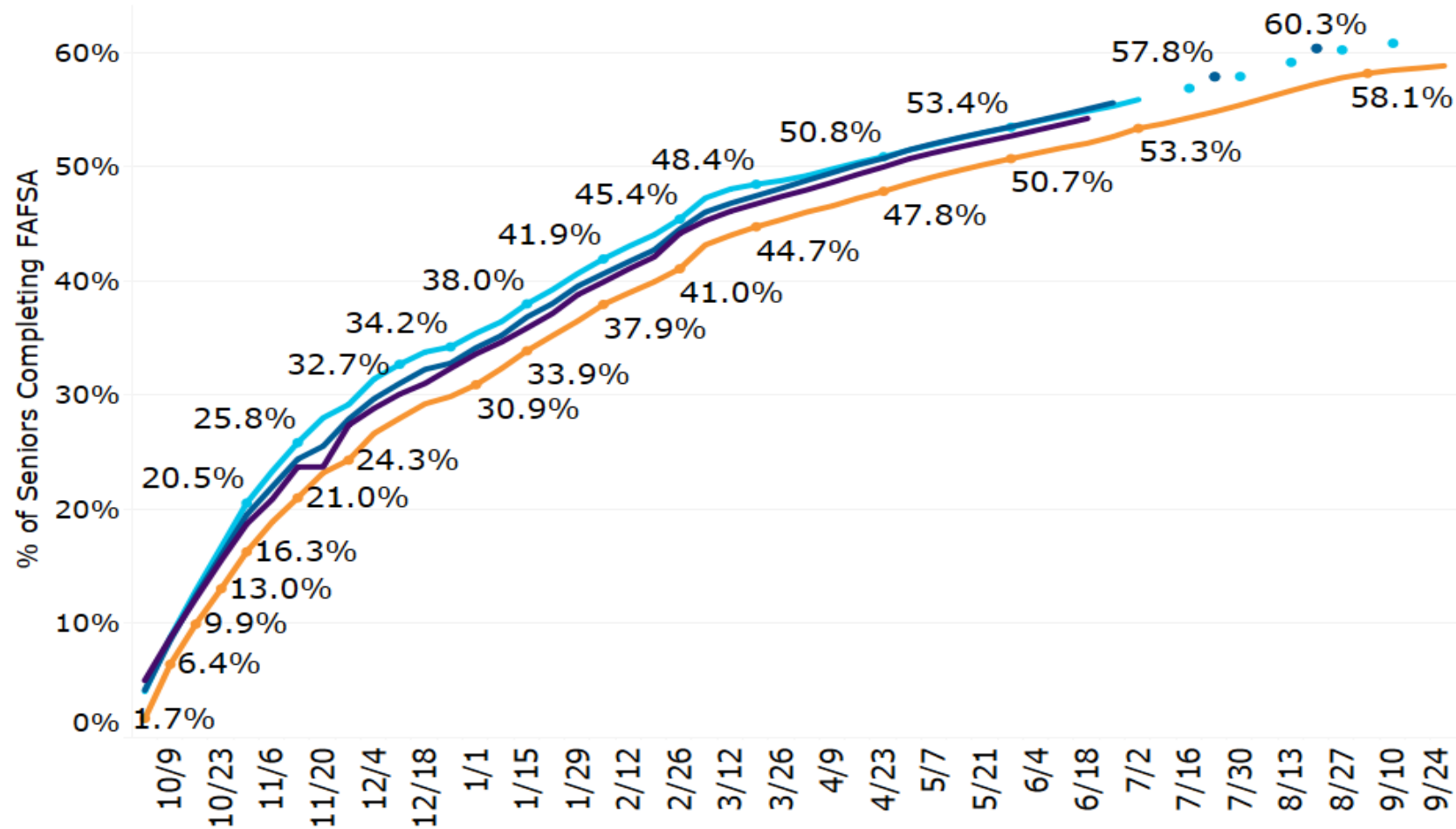


## % Change in HS FAFSA Completions, United States, Through Week 52, 2018-19 through 2021-22 Cycles



THE CLASSES OF 2020 & 2021 CONVERGED, BUT BOTH LAGGED THE CLASSES OF 2019 & 2020

## % of High School Seniors Completing a FAFSA, United States, Through Week 52, 2018-19 through 2021-22 Cycles



### Measure Names

2018-19

2019-20

2020-21

2021-22

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BY PERCENT  
OF SENIORS  
COMPLETING,  
THE CLASS OF  
2021 CYCLE  
WAS ALSO A  
MAJOR  
DECLINE

## 2021-22 FAFSA Cycle Top 5 States by Condition

1	2	3	4	5
LA	TN	NJ	MS	DC
78.0%	74.6%	70.6%	69.9%	69.0%

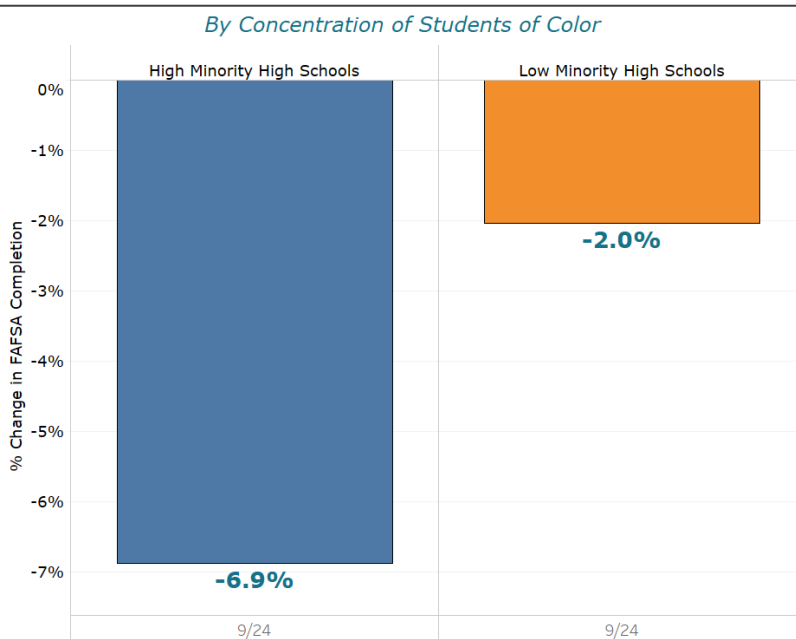
% OF SENIORS  
COMPLETING A FAFSA

1	2	3	4	5
IL	WY	SD	PR	ND
3.7%	3.6%	0.1%	-0.5%	-1.2%

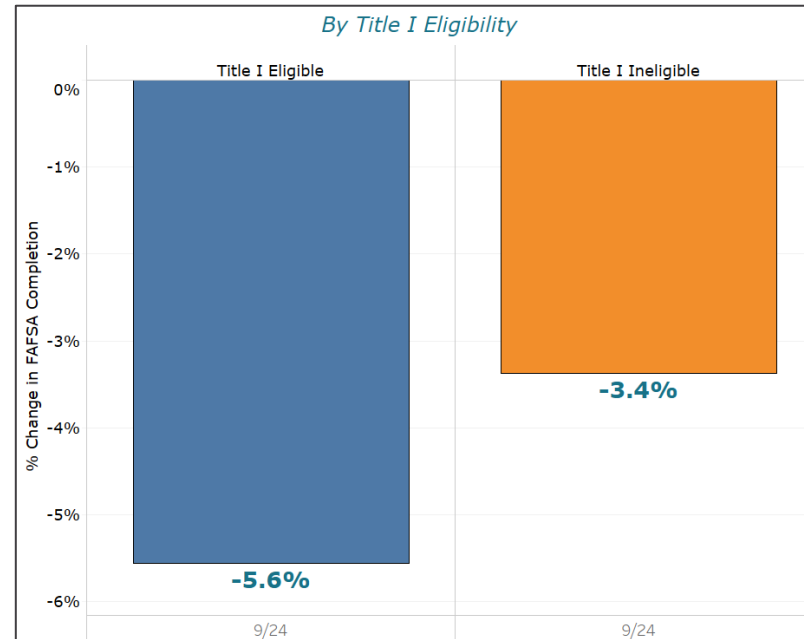
YEAR-OVER-YEAR  
% CHANGE

# FAFSA COMPLETION DECLINES ARE INEQUITABLY DISTRIBUTED

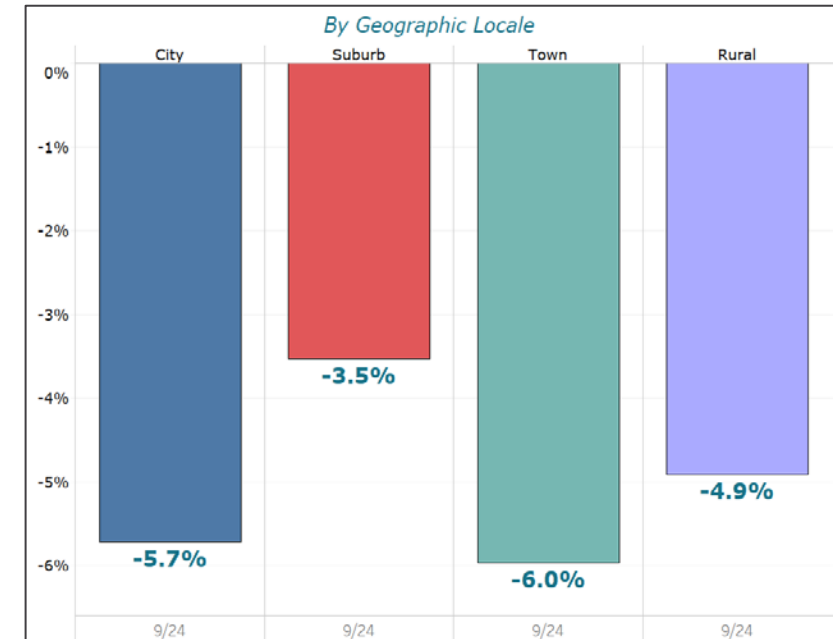
## % Students of Color



## Title I Status



## Geography

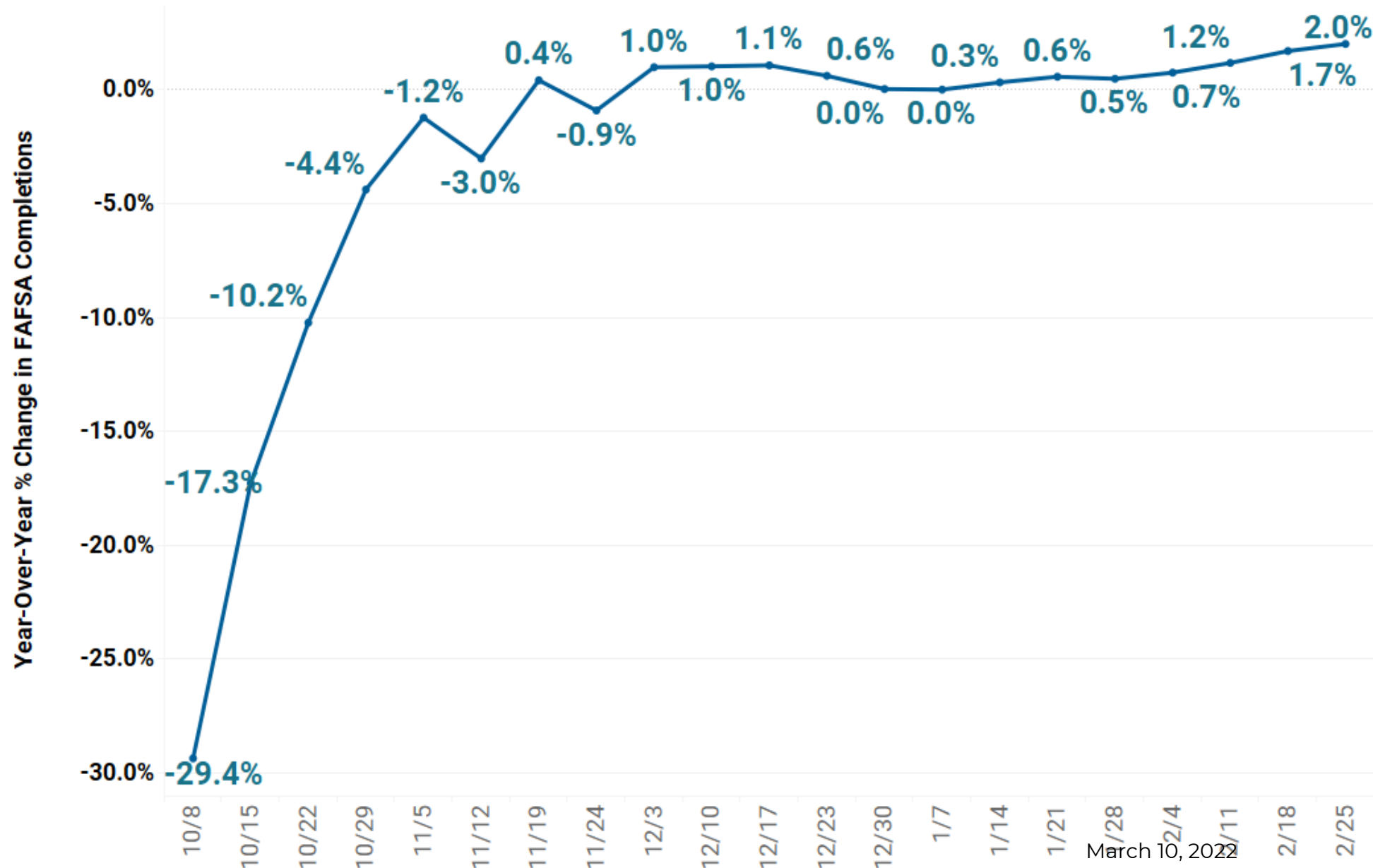


# NATIONAL: 2021-22 CYCLE

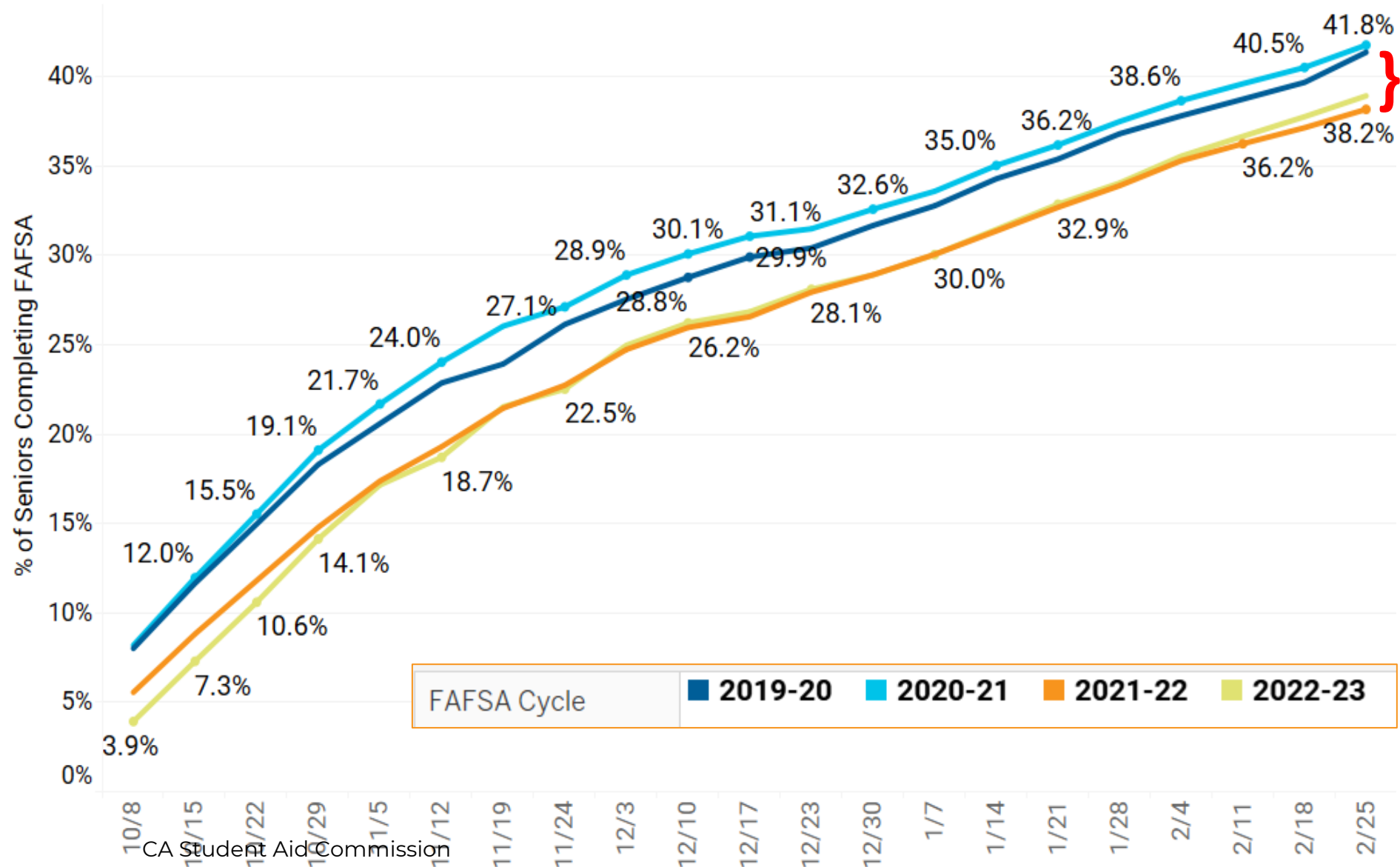
# MOVING ON TO THE CLASS OF 2022 CYCLE

THE CLASS  
OF 2022  
CYCLE  
FALTERED,  
ROSE,  
STALLED,  
AND IS NOW  
RISING  
AGAIN.

% Change in FAFSA Completions, Class of 2022 over 2021, Through February 25, 2022

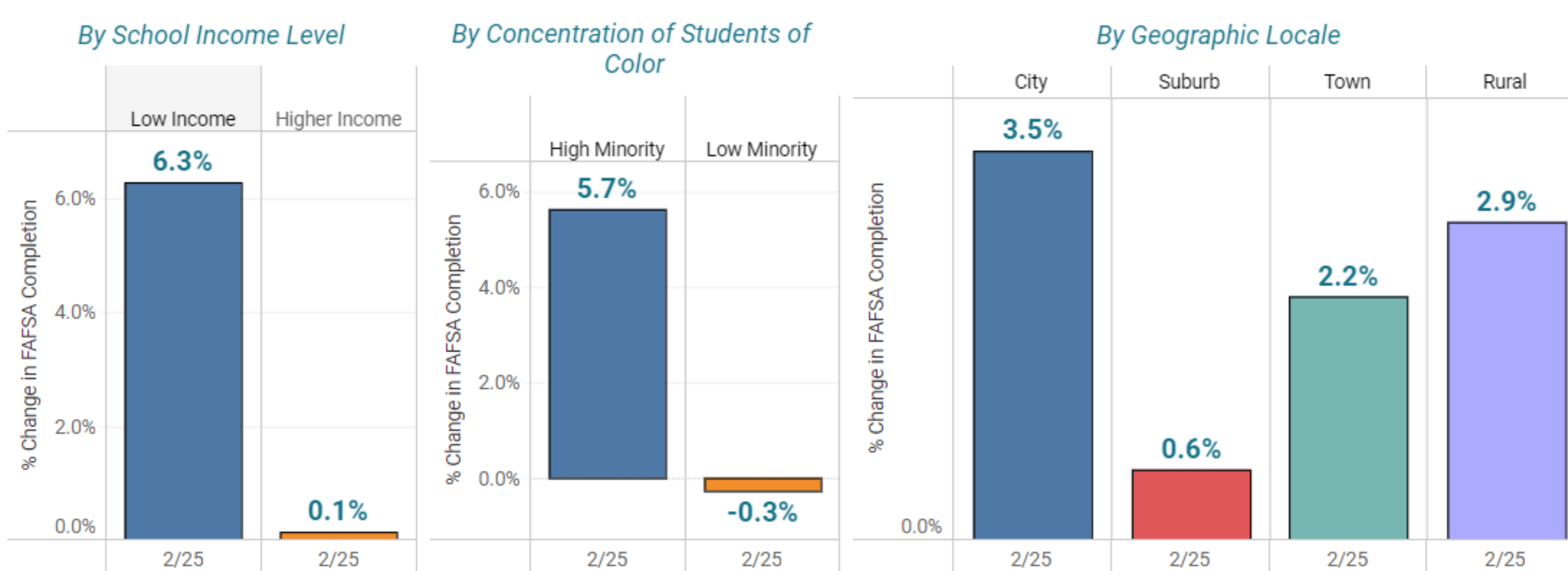


## % of U.S. Seniors Completing a FAFSA, High School Classes of 2019-2022, Through Week 22 of Cycle



THE CLASS OF  
2022 IS STILL  
NOT CLOSE  
TO PRE-  
PANDEMIC  
FAFSA  
COMPLETION  
RATES

# THIS BOUNCEBACK BY HIGH SCHOOL CATEGORIES IS A SILVER LINING



# AND NOW A LIVE LOOK AT CALIFORNIA THIS FAFSA CYCLE...

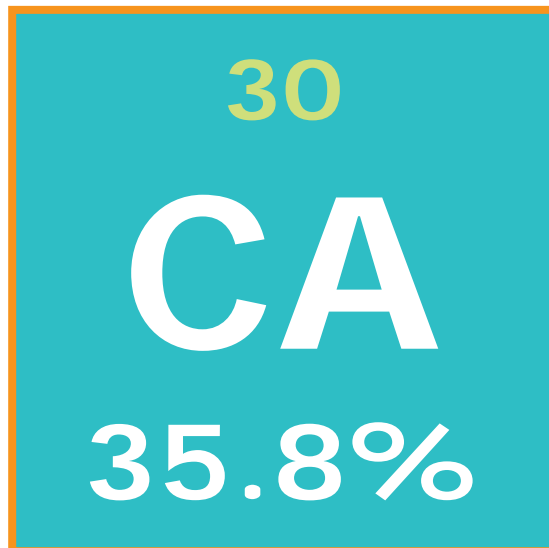


# 2022-23 FAFSA Cycle

## Top 5 States by Condition (through 2/25)

1 TN 57.4%	2 DC 52.7%	3 IL 51.0%	4 TX 48.6%	5 KY 41.8%	1 TX 24.8%	2 AL 15.2%	3 MS 9.0%	4 UT 5.3%	5 WV 5.2%
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% OF SENIORS  
COMPLETING A FAFSA



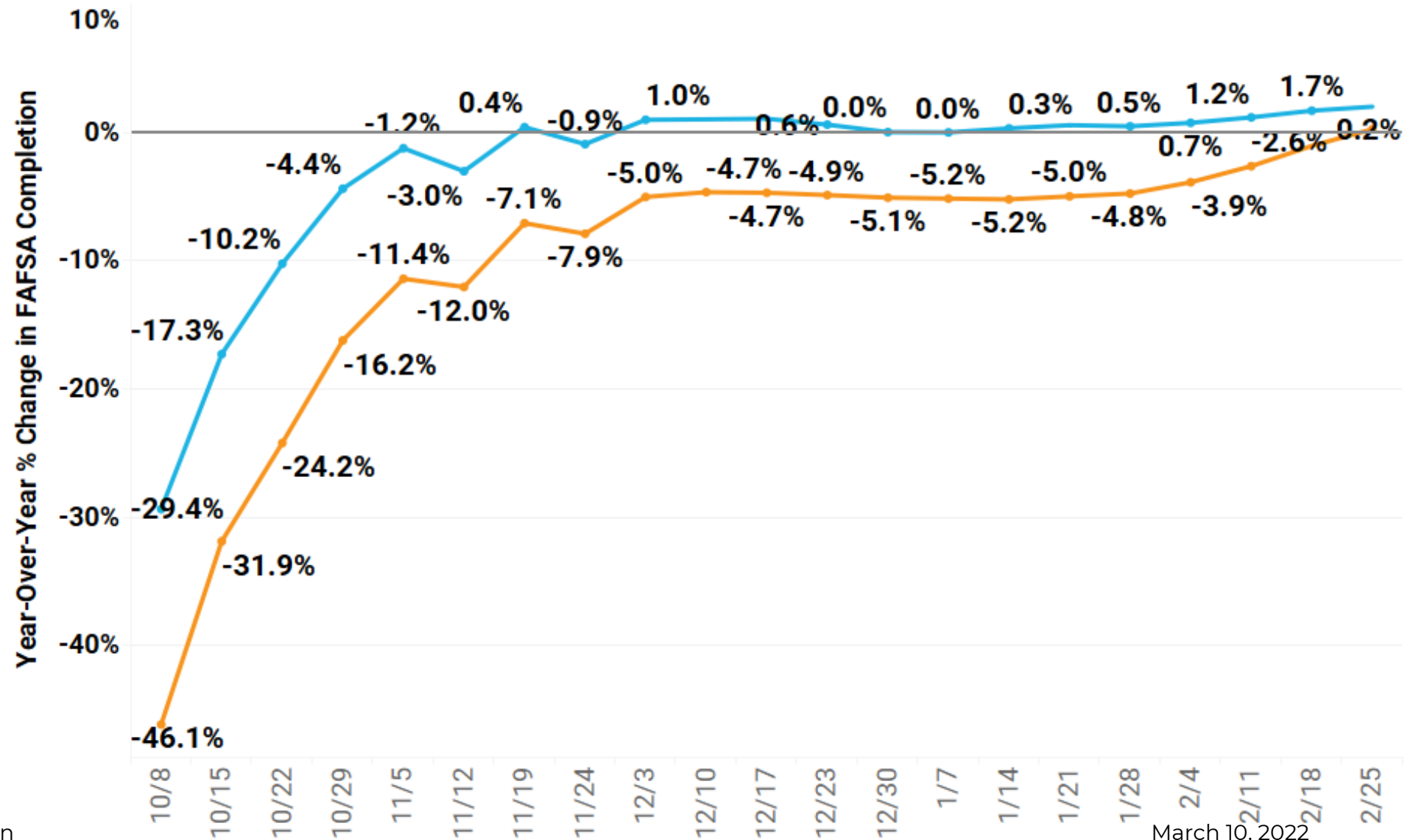
YEAR-OVER-YEAR  
% CHANGE



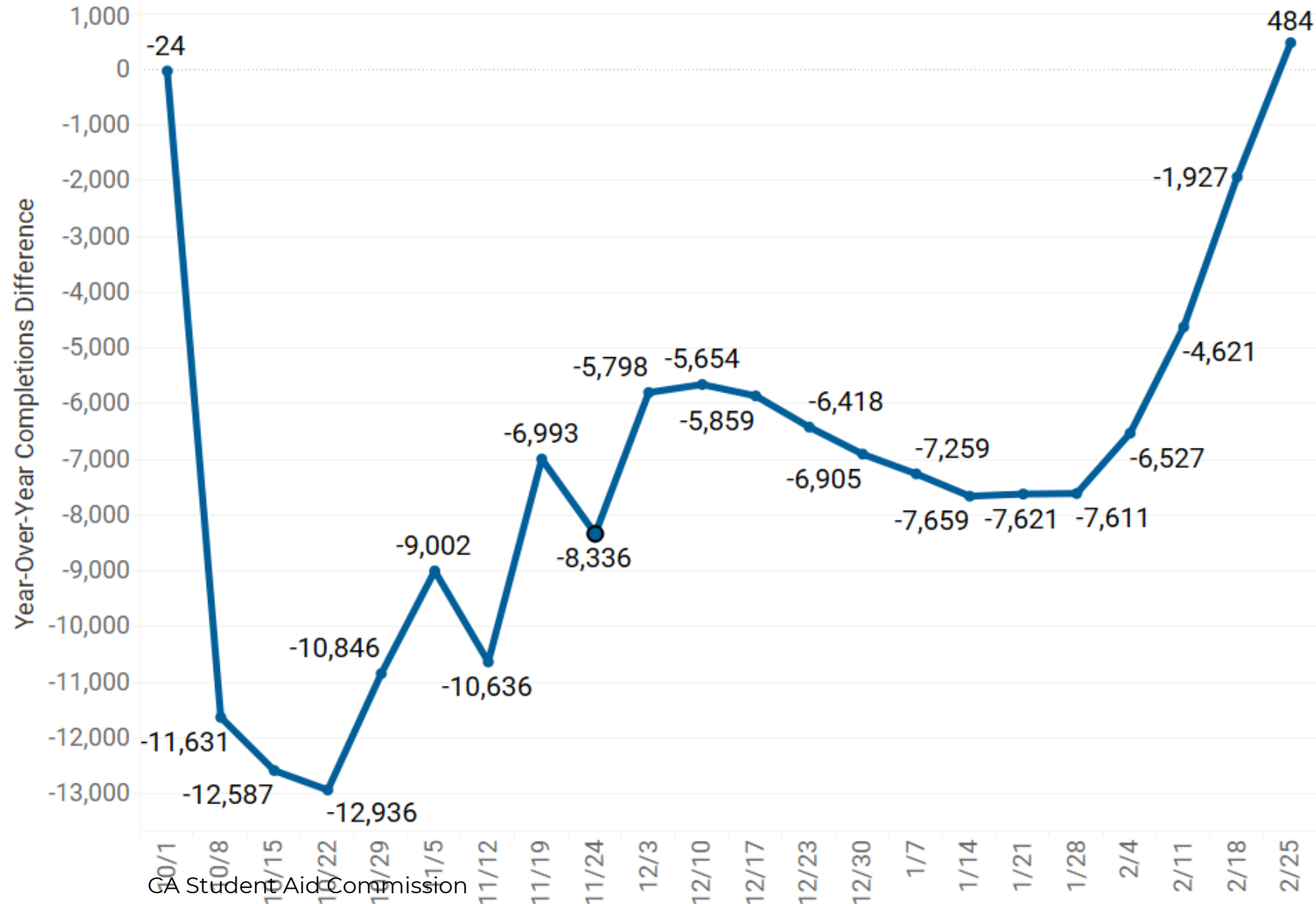
CALIFORNIA'S  
RECENT GAINS  
HAVE  
CHANGED THE  
SHAPE OF  
FAFSA  
COMPLETION  
NATIONALLY

## Year-Over-Year % Change in FAFSA Completion Through 2/25/22

California vs. National



## California Year-Over-Year Difference in FAFSA Completions, Through 2/25/22

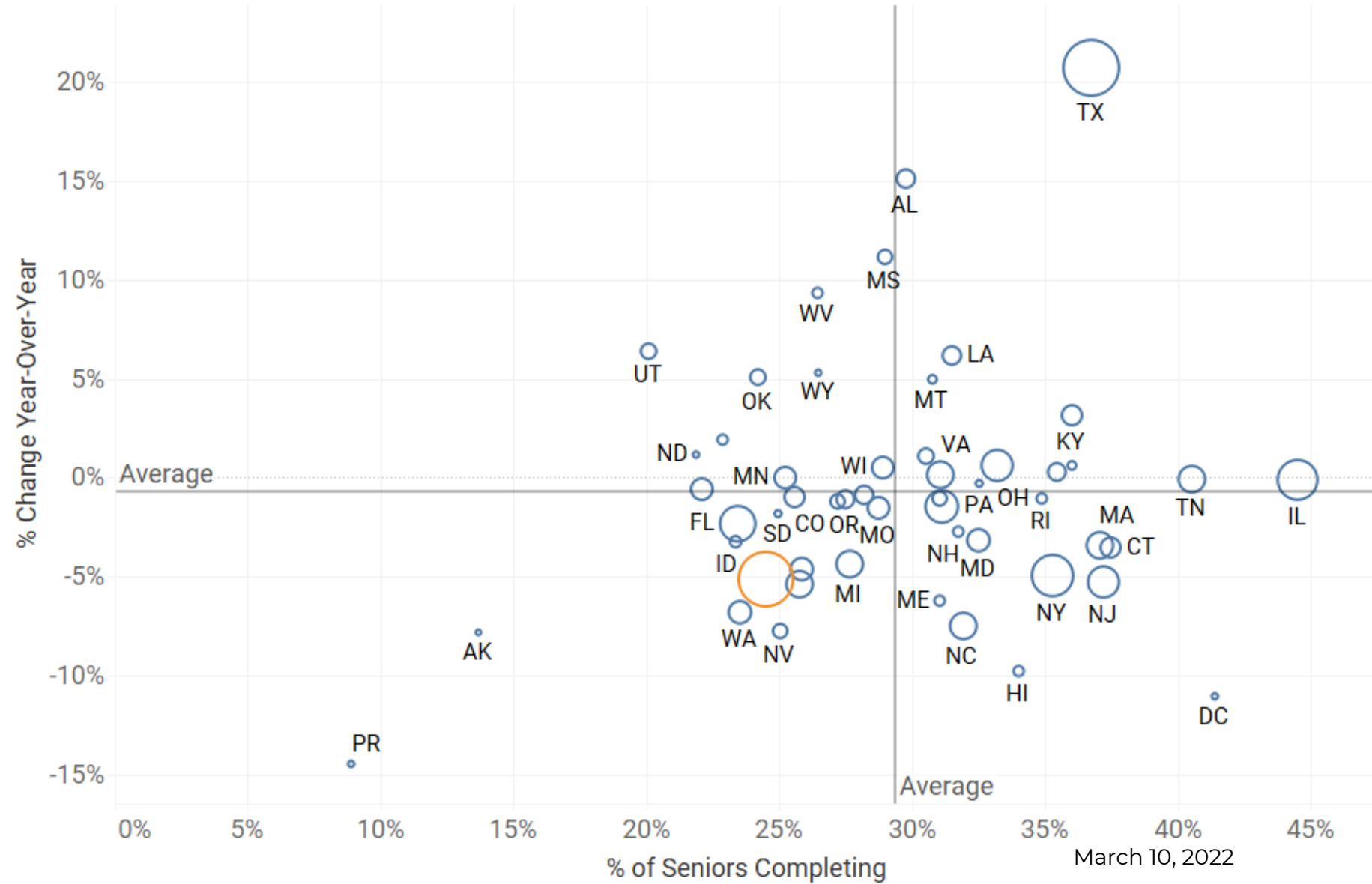


AS RECENTLY AS  
JANUARY,  
CALIFORNIA'S  
DECLINES  
NEGATED EVERY  
NON-TEXAS  
STATE'S GAINS.

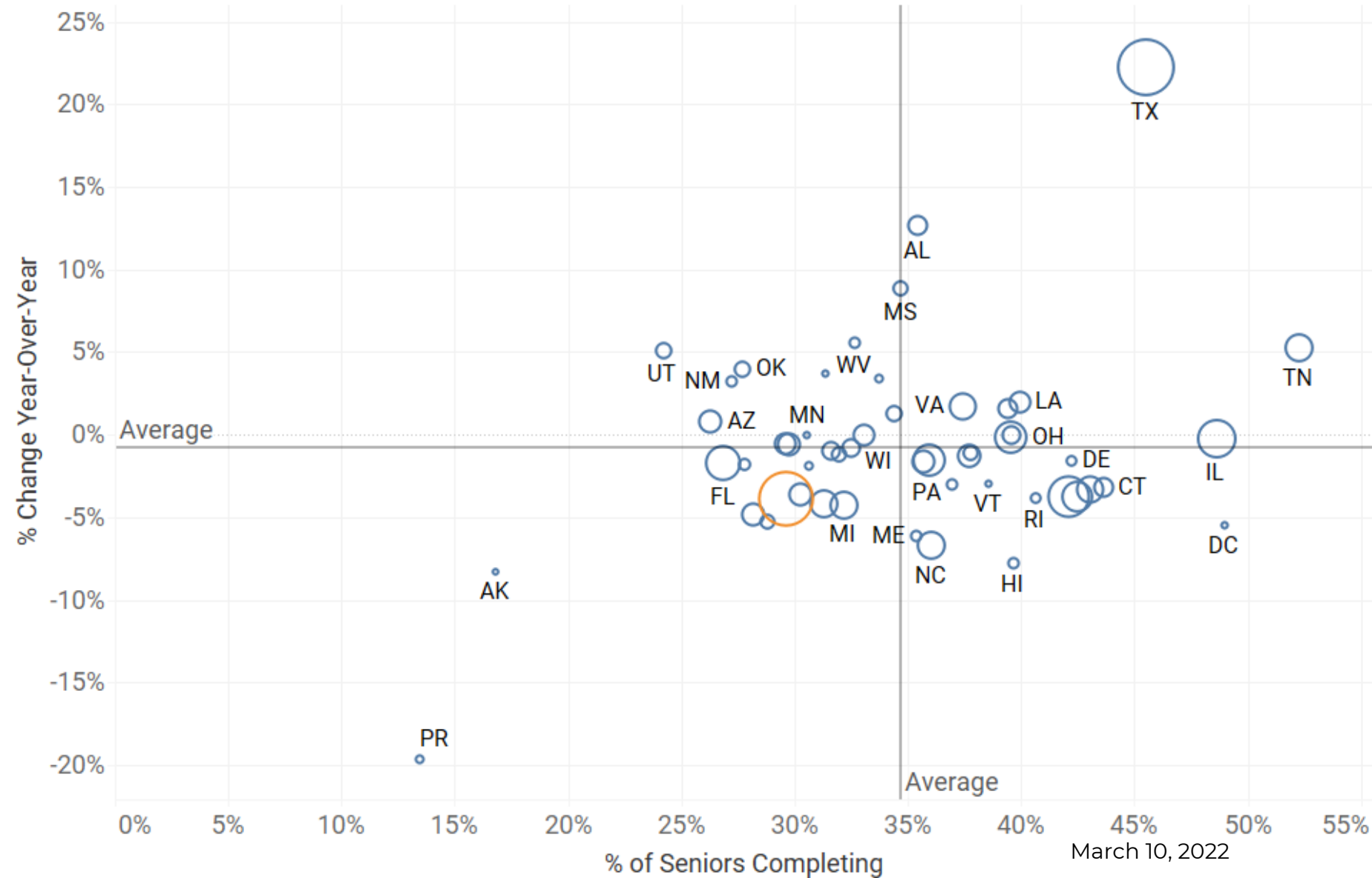
NOW CALIFORNIA  
IS BACK IN THE  
BLACK.

WATCH THE  
ORANGE  
CIRCLE'S  
MOVEMENT  
OVER THE PAST  
TWO MONTHS

**HS Class of 2022 FAFSA Completion Through 1/7, By State, % Change in FAFSA Completions by % of Seniors Completing (Size Weight: # of FAFSAs Completed)**



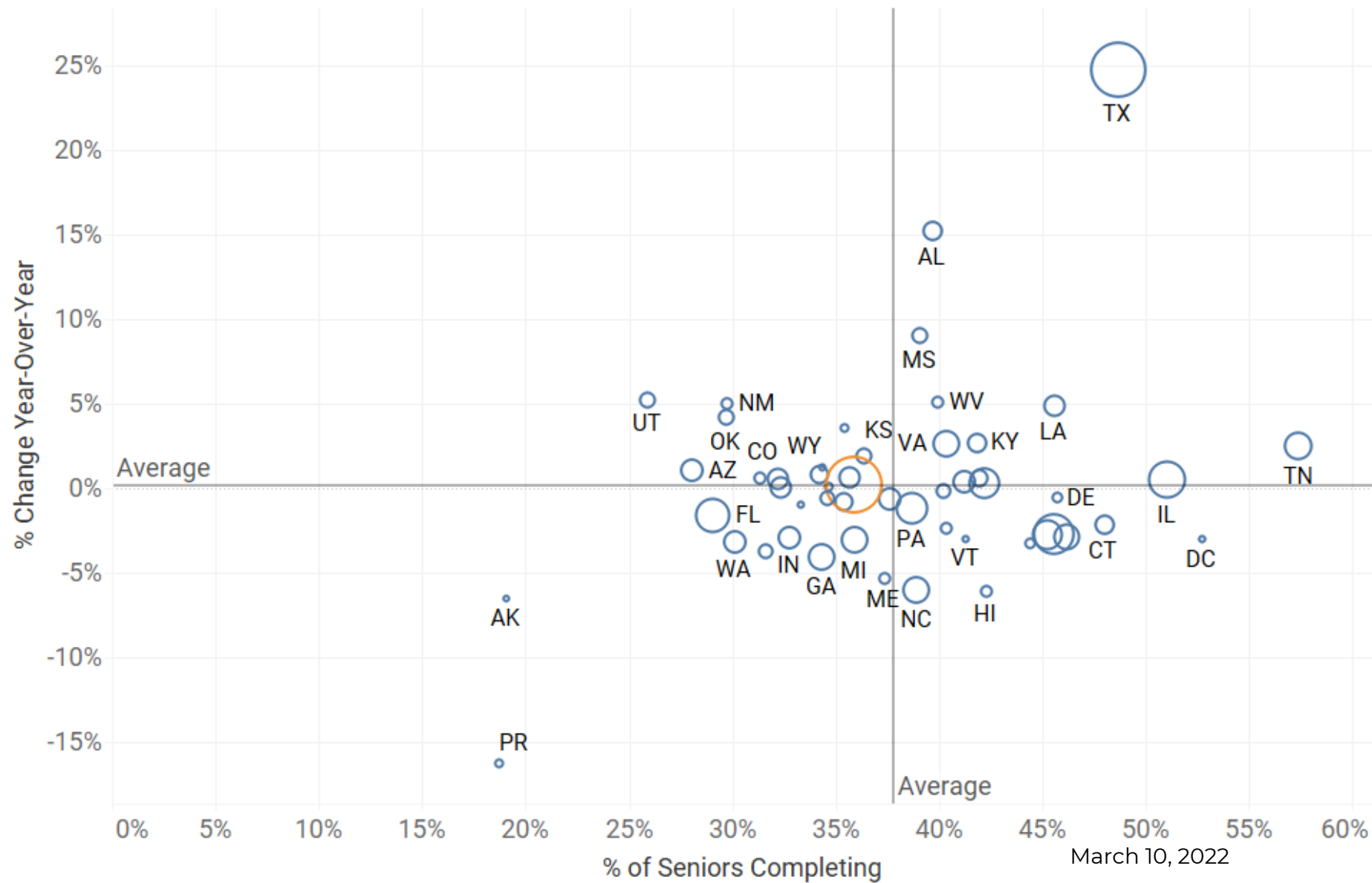
## HS Class of 2022 FAFSA Completion Through 2/4, By State, % Change in FAFSA Completions by % of Seniors Completing (Size Weight: # of FAFSAs Completed)



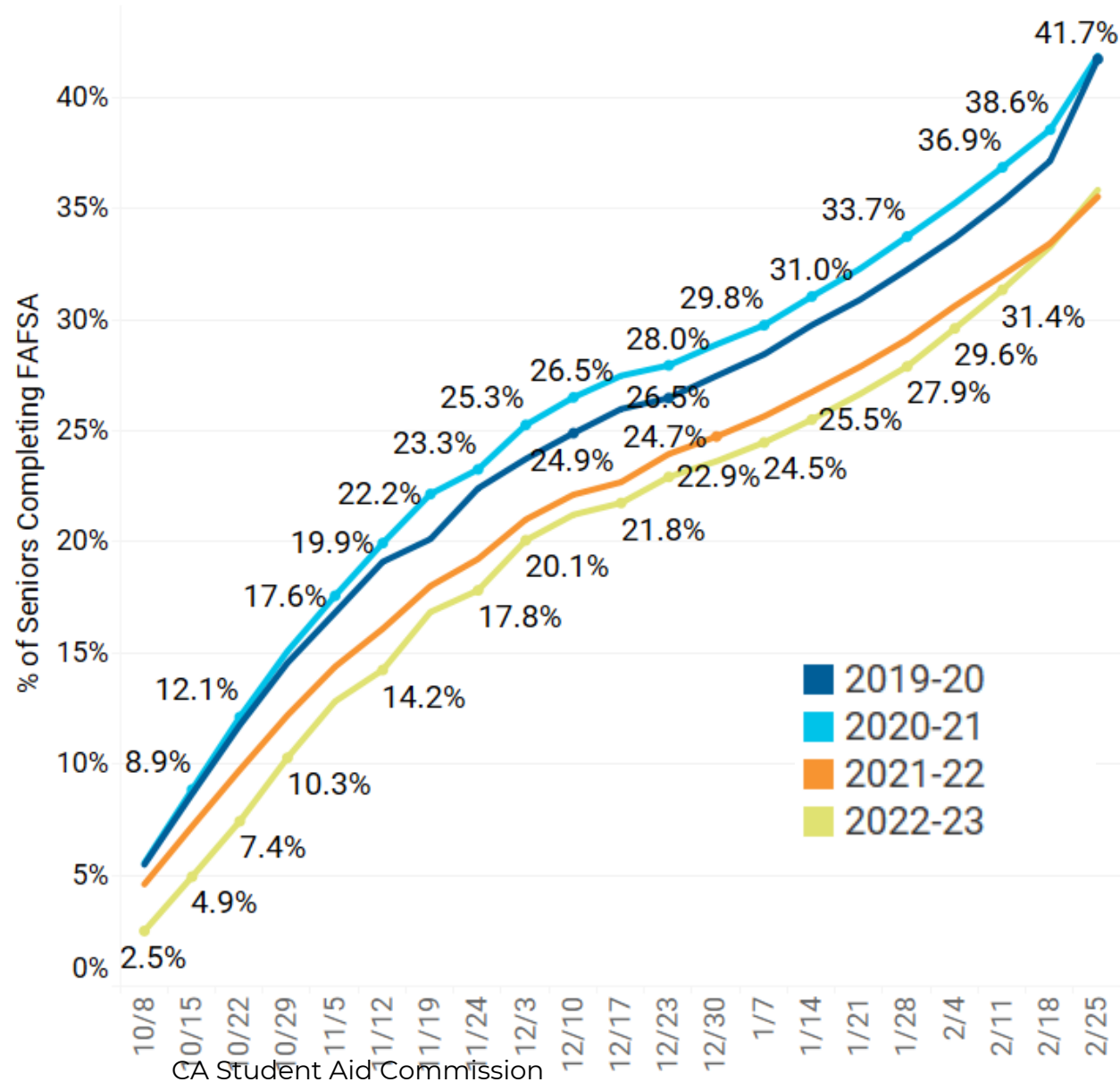
WATCH THE  
ORANGE  
CIRCLE'S  
MOVEMENT  
OVER THE PAST  
TWO MONTHS

WATCH THE  
ORANGE  
CIRCLE'S  
MOVEMENT  
OVER THE PAST  
TWO MONTHS

**HS Class of 2022 FAFSA Completion Through 2/25, By State, % Change in FAFSA Completions by % of Seniors Completing** (Size Weight: # of FAFSAs Completed)



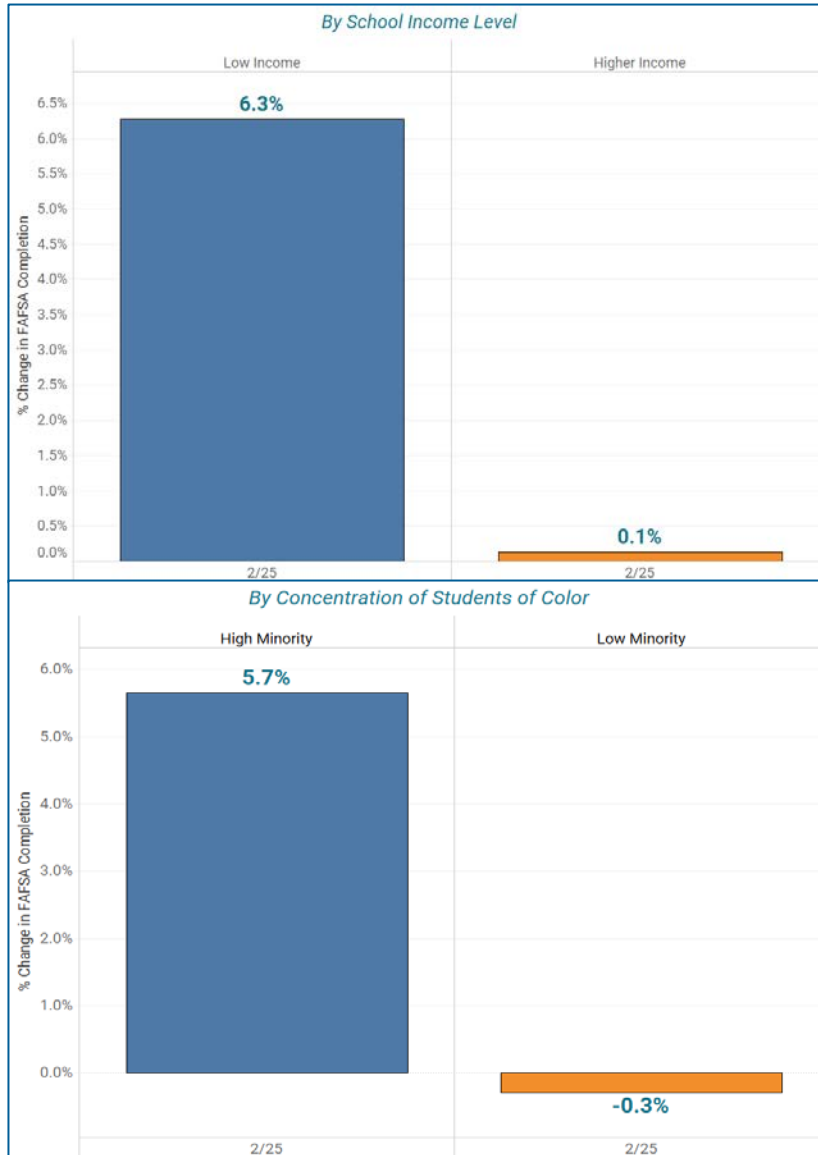
## California



DESPITE THESE GAINS, THERE'S STILL PLENTY OF WORK TO DO TO GET BACK TO A PRE-PANDEMIC BASELINE OF THE % OF SENIORS COMPLETING

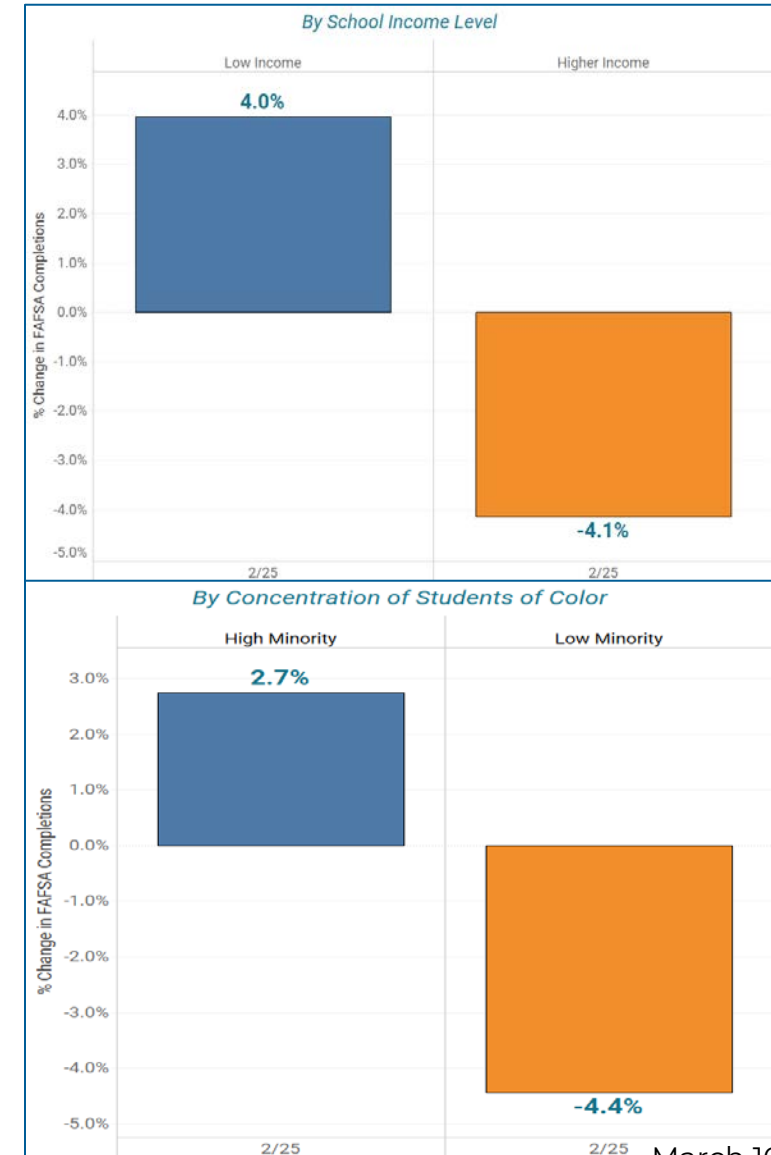
# DESPITE GAINS, FAFSA COMPLETION IS STILL INEQUITABLY DISTRIBUTED

NATIONAL

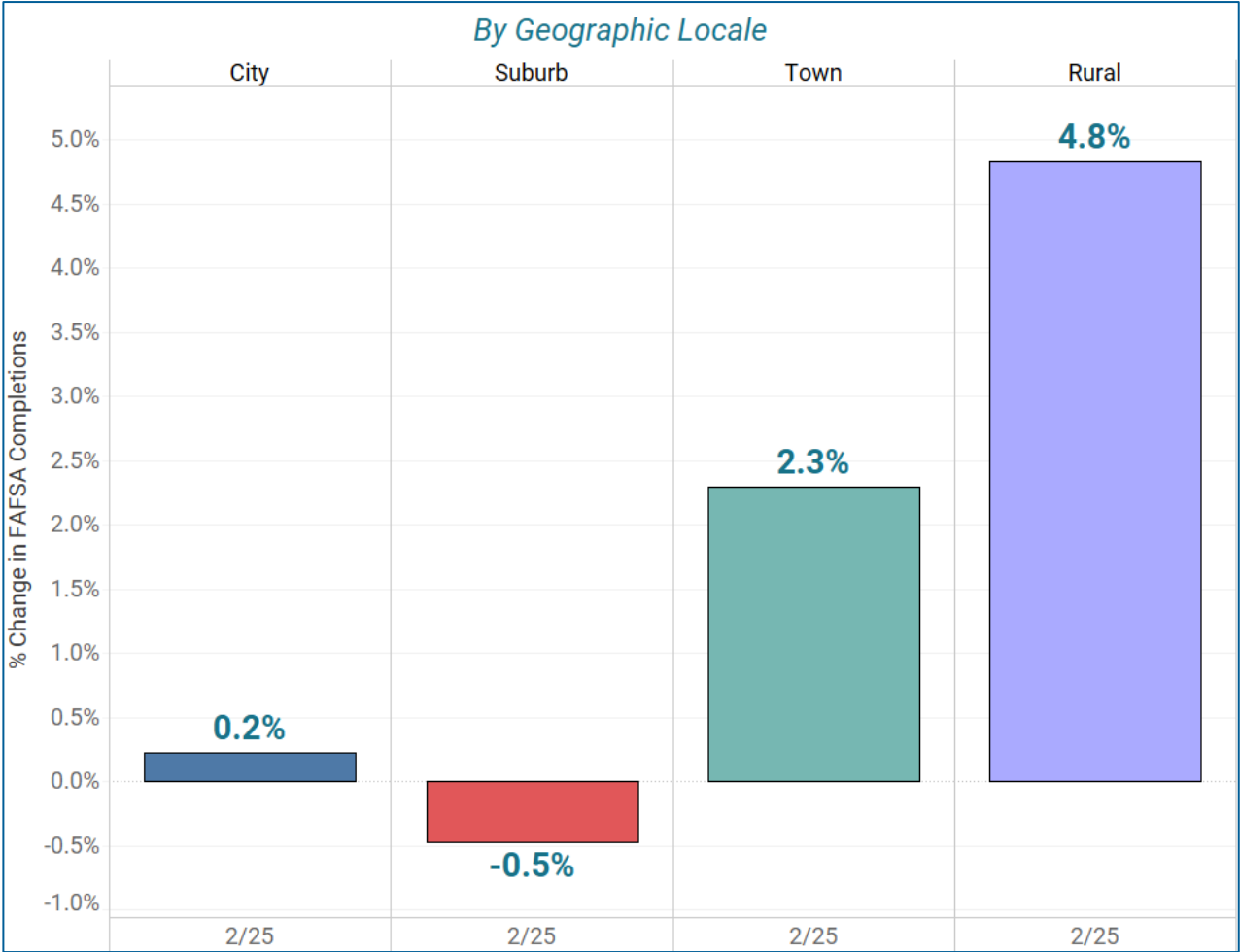
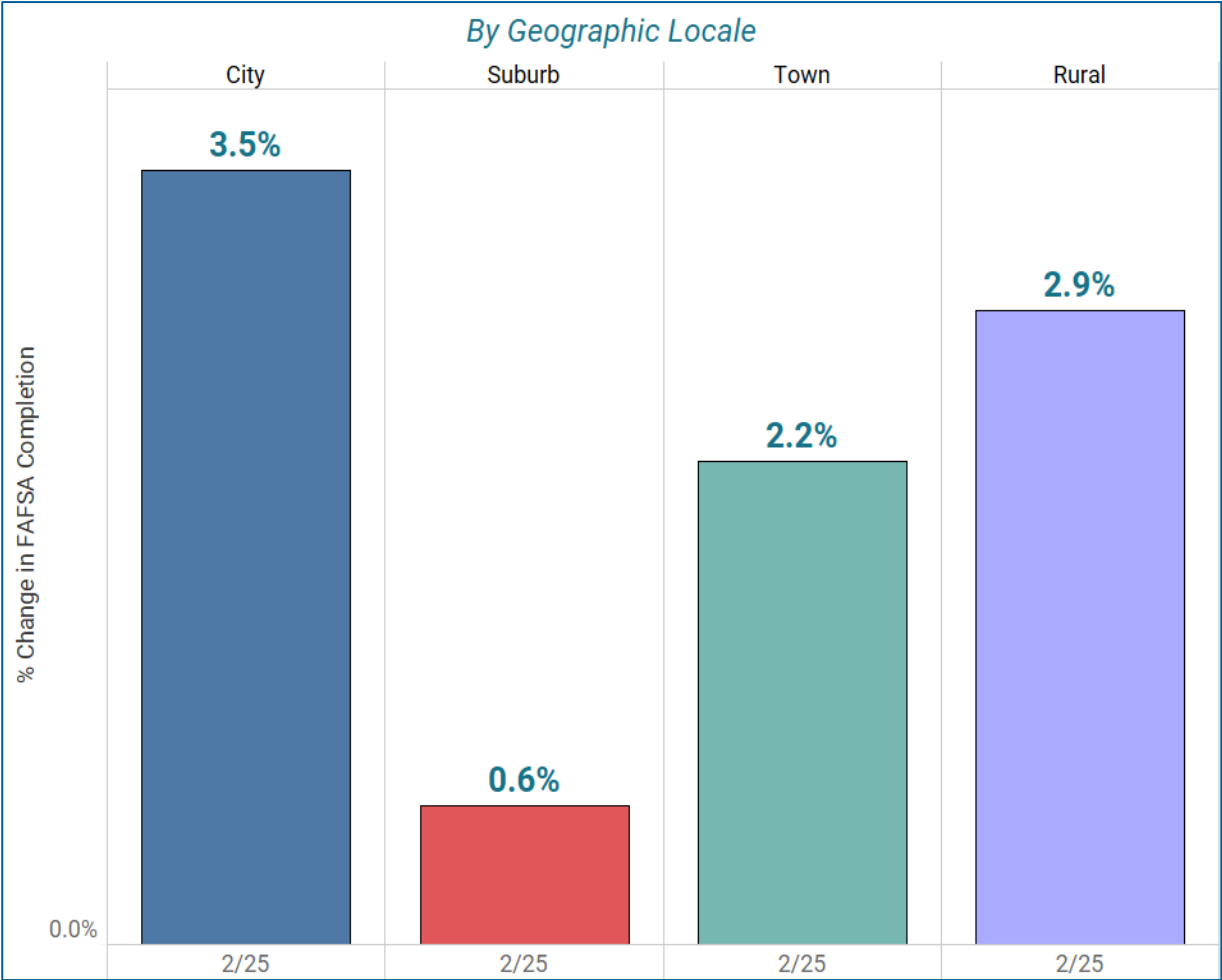


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CALIFORNIA



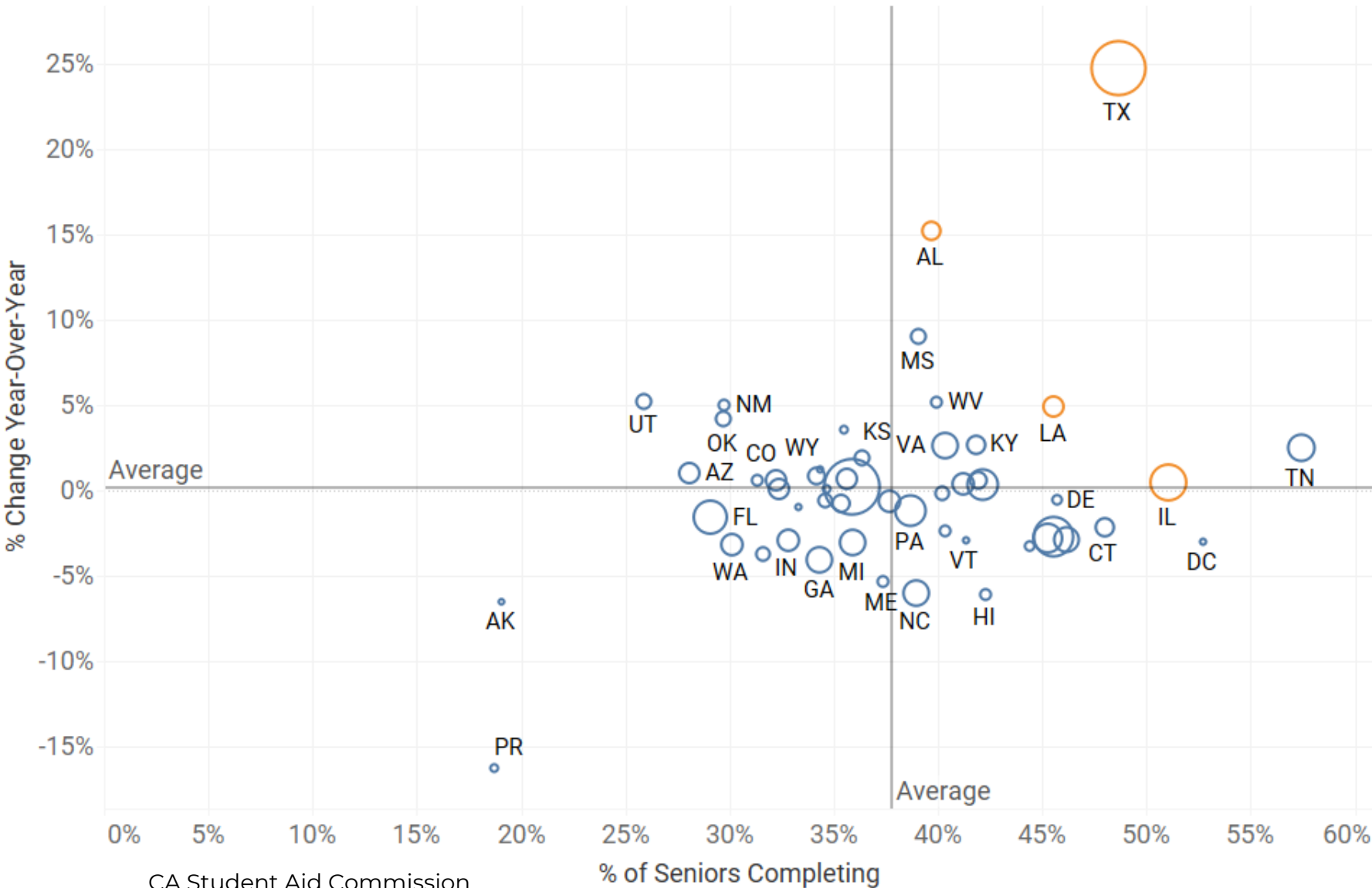
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NATIONAL

CALIFORNIA

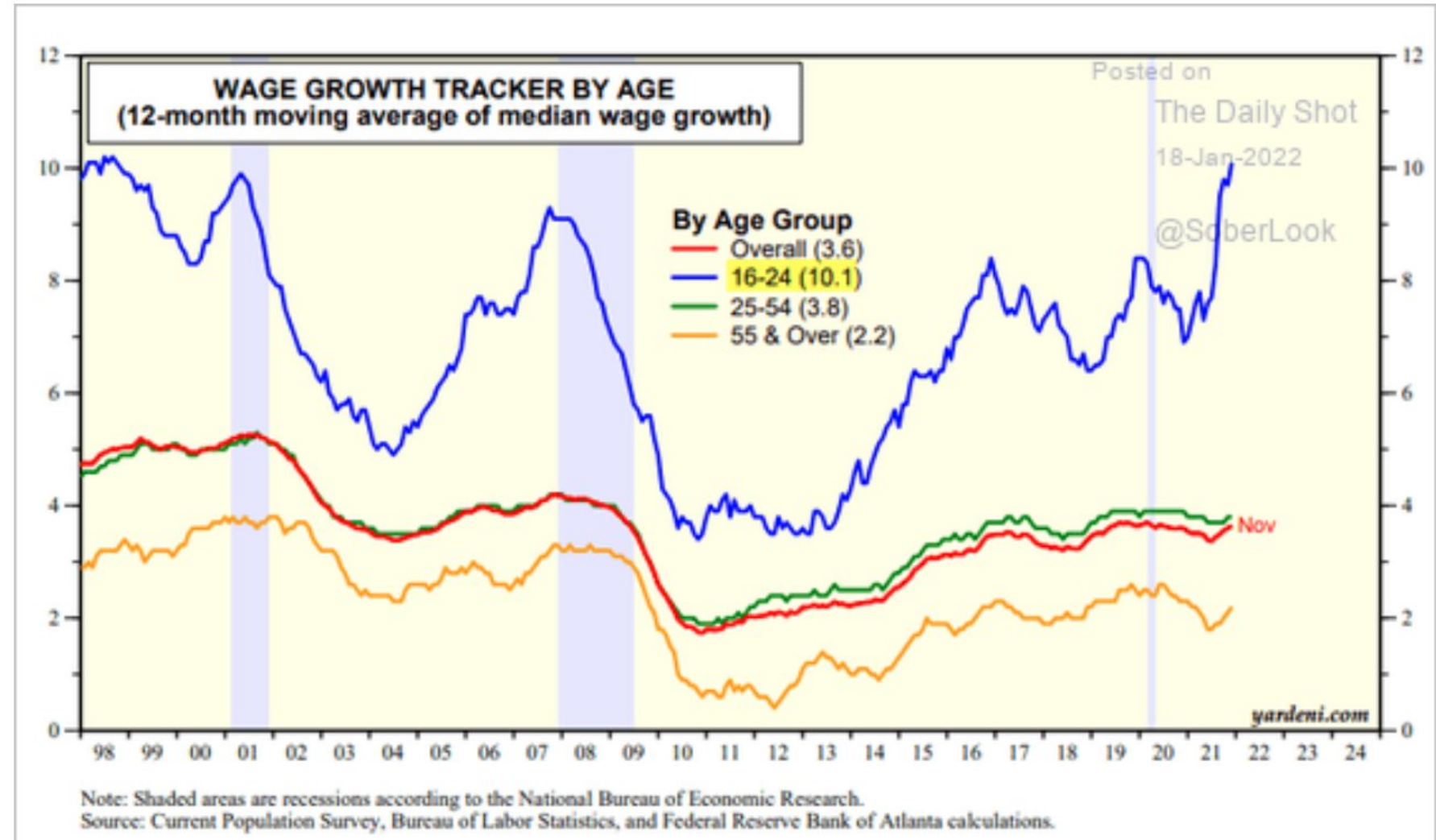
## HS Class of 2022 FAFSA Completion Through 2/25, By State, % Change in FAFSA Completions by % of Seniors Completing (Size Weight: # of FAFSAs Completed)



A PREVIEW OF  
CALIFORNIA'S  
FUTURE?  
STATES WITH  
UNIVERSAL  
FAFSA  
POLICIES ARE  
DOING WELL;  
TEXAS' GAINS  
ARE DRIVING  
THIS FAFSA  
CYCLE

PARTING  
THOUGHT:  
FAFSA  
COMPLETION  
DOESN'T  
EXIST IN A  
VACUUM.

ECONOMIC  
CONDITIONS  
MATTER.



Source: [Yardeni Research](#)

# REACH OUT ANY TIME!



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