

First lady Jill Biden makes stop in Mesa to promote administration's commitment to education

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PHOENIX — First lady Jill Biden spent her Monday in the Valley in Mesa highlighting her husband's administration's dedication to education.

Biden and others spoke about the success of the [Mesa College Promise](#), a program started in 2021 that provides the city's eligible high school graduates with two free years at Mesa Community College.

The first lady was joined by Gov. Katie Hobbs, Education Secretary Miguel Cardona and Mesa Mayor John Giles during the appearance.

“We need more communities to follow Mesa’s lead,” Biden said at the event at MCC. “Look at the diversity here.”

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“No matter their background — where they come from, who they are — every single student will have the chance to follow their passions and find a pathway to a great job.”

Lilly Hernandez, a beneficiary of the program, said she initially wasn’t planning to go to college after high school because her family couldn’t afford to pay for it.

She got a job at Lowe’s, but it didn’t pay enough for her to leave her parents’ house.

A conversation with a vice principal at her old high school led to her applying for the program.

“I was accepted into the Mesa Promise program and the fact that I don’t have to pay for a tuition is the only reason I’m able to stand here today,” Hernandez said.

Giles, a Republican, said raising money for the program has been “the easiest job I’ve ever had as mayor.”

The program’s fall 2023 application process opens March 1, with a priority deadline of May 15 and a final deadline of July 15.

KTAR News 92.3 FM’s Griselda Zetino contributed to this report.