

Date of Hearing: April 21, 2015

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
Jose Medina, Chair  
AB 1228 (Gipson and Atkins) – As Introduced February 27, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Public postsecondary education: campus housing: priority for homeless youth

**SUMMARY:** Brings parity to current and former homeless youth to that of current and former foster youth by requesting and requiring, as specified, California's public postsecondary institutions, to, among other things, provide priority campus housing to current and former homeless youth, as defined. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requests the University of California (UC) Regents and the California State University (CSU) Trustees to explore methods of using the admissions-by-exemption category to assist the transition of students who are homeless into four-year public institutions of higher education.
- 2) Requests California Community Colleges (CCC), in order to ensure current and former homeless youth have stable housing, to give priority for housing these students; requests a CCC campus that maintains student housing facilities open for occupation during school breaks, or on a year-round basis, to give first priority to current and former homeless youth for residence in the housing facilities that are open for uninterrupted year-round occupation and provide this housing to current and former homeless and/or foster youth at no extra cost during the academic or campus breaks, and next give priority to current and former homeless youth for housing that is open for occupation during the most days in the calendar year.
- 3) Requests a campus of a CCC to develop a plan to ensure that current and former foster and homeless youth can access housing resources as needed during and between academic terms, including during academic and campus breaks.
- 4) Defines "homeless youth" to mean a student under 25 years of age, who has been verified, in the case of a former homeless youth at any time during the prior six years, as a homeless child or youth as defined in Section 725 of the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. Section 11434a(2)), by at least one of the following:
  - a) A homeless services provider, as specified;
  - b) The director, or his or her designee, of a federal TRIO program or a Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs program; and,
  - c) A financial aid administrator.
- 5) Requires the CSU and UC to adhere to numbers two and three above.
- 6) Specifies that numbers two and three above only apply to the UC if the Regents, by appropriate resolution, make this section applicable.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Requests the UC Regents and the CSU Trustees to explore methods of using the admissions-by-exemption category to assist the transition of students in foster care into four-year public institutions of higher education (Education Code Section 66019.3).
- 2) Ensures that current and former foster youth who are students at the campuses of the CCC have stable housing, by requesting a CCC campus to give priority for housing to current and former foster youth. Additionally, requests a CCC campus that maintains student housing facilities open for occupation during school breaks, or on a year-round basis, to give first priority to current and former foster youth for residence in the housing facilities that are open for uninterrupted year-round occupation, and next give priority to current and former foster youth for housing that is open for occupation during the most days in the calendar year (EC Section 76010).
- 3) Ensures that current and former foster youth who are students at campuses of the CSU and UC have stable housing, by requiring a CSU and UC campus that maintains student housing facilities to give priority to current and former foster youth. Additionally, a CSU and UC that maintains student housing facilities open for occupation during school breaks, or on a year-round basis, shall first give priority to current or former foster youth for residence in the housing facilities that are open for uninterrupted year-round occupation, and next give priority to current or former foster youth for housing that is open for occupation during the most days in the calendar year. Specifies that the UC shall adhere to said requirements to the extent that the UC Regents approve to do so by an appropriate resolution (EC Sections 90001.5 and 92660).

**FEDERAL LAW:** Defines the term "homeless children and youth" to mean individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, as specified, including, but not limited to, the following: 1) children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; 2) are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; 3) are living in emergency or transitional shelters; 4) are abandoned in hospitals; 5) are awaiting foster care placement; 6) have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; and, 7) are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings (42 U.S.C. Section 11301, et seq.).

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:** *Background.* According to the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY), college homelessness is a serious issue that is often overlooked; there exists an assumption that if someone is homeless, he/she is so focused on basic needs like food and shelter that school is not a concern. However, NAEHCY contends that for homeless youth, education is the answer to providing homeless youth means to be able to enter into the work force, earn a living, and no longer be homeless.

To note, there is no concrete estimate for the number of homeless college students nationwide, but 58,158 college applicants indicated that they were homeless on federal financial aid forms for the 2012-13 academic year (most recent data available to date); which, according to NAEHCY, is up eight percent from 53,705 in the previous year, according to federal data. NAEHCY argues that the number is likely understated, since some students may be staying in a

car, relatives' or fellow classmates' couches, or motels, and do not realize they are technically homeless, or do not want to admit to it. Additionally, California has the highest rate of homeless youth in the nation and twice the rate of homeless students as the national average (four percent in CA vs. two percent nationally).

*Purpose of this measure.* According to the author, housing proves to be a regular barrier to homeless youth succeeding in college. The author states, "This bill will help prioritize homeless youth for on-campus housing but also make such housing available to them during academic breaks to help prevent other problems from arising in the student's life that distracts them from succeeding in their educational pursuits."

*Federal TRIO programs.* TRIO programs are federal outreach and student services programs designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. TRIO includes eight programs targeted to serve and assist low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to postbaccalaureate programs.

*Existing resources available to homeless students. UC.* UC campuses work with current and former homeless students by providing them with emergency financial support, temporary housing, food, and connecting them with community resources. Each campus has case managers or social workers in place to work with these students and assist in their transition. The UC system has a global food initiative that includes food security for low-income students. Additionally, UC at Los Angeles (UCLA) administers a program focused on assisting current and former homeless youth that has received nationwide attention. UCLA's program provides food vouchers and free stays in vacant dormitory rooms to its homeless students. UC at Davis and San Diego also operate food pantries. To note, presently, there is no known explicit UC policy to ensuring current and former homeless youth have priority in receiving campus housing.

*CSU.* Many CSU campuses have community partnerships with local entities in order to provide necessary services and needs for current and former homeless students. To note, presently, there is no known explicit CSU policy to ensuring current and former homeless youth have priority in receiving campus housing

*CCC.* Currently of the 112 campuses, 11 campuses provide student apartments and/or dormitory rooms that are either on campus or adjacent to the campus. To note, presently, there is no known explicit CCC policy to ensuring current and former homeless youth have priority in receiving campus housing.

*Related legislation.* AB 801 (Bloom), which will be heard by this Committee today, would enact the Success for Homeless Youth in Higher Education Act, which among other things, would extend priority enrollment with respect to the CSU and CCC to current and former homeless youth, as defined.

## **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

### **Support**

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees  
California Coalition for Youth  
Housing California (sponsor)

National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter  
Public Counsel's Children's Rights Project  
State Public Affairs Committee of the Junior Leagues of California  
1 Individual

**Opposition**

None on file.

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