

Date of Hearing: April 25, 2017

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 1284 (Calderon) – As Amended March 21, 2017

SUBJECT: Postsecondary education: students with disabilities.

SUMMARY: Changes the references of "disabled student" to "student with disabilities" throughout the Education Code (EC). Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Finds and declares that using people first language when referring to students with disabilities helps to eliminate generalizations and stereotypes by focusing on and acknowledging the person rather than the disability.
- 2) States the Legislature intends to replace non-people first references with people first language in the EC provisions governing postsecondary education.
- 3) Changes "disabled student" to "student with disabilities" and makes similar changes regarding specific disabilities throughout the EC provisions governing postsecondary education.
- 4) Makes clarifying and technical changes to various EC provision governing postsecondary education.

EXISTING LAW: Provides for various programs and services for students with disabilities in higher education (EC Sections 66025.91, 66450, 67300, 67310, 67311, 67313, 78212, 78230, 78907, 84750.5, 84850, 87003, 87356, 89037, and 99156).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: *Background.* According to information from the author, people with disabilities constitute the largest minority population in the United States. One in five people, or 54 million people residing in the United States, have a disability. Additionally, in 2011, per the National Center for Educational Statistics, 11 percent of college students reported having a disability.

According to The Arc, an advocacy group for people with disabilities, people first language is an objective way of acknowledging, communicating, and reporting on disabilities; it eliminates generalizations and stereotypes, by focusing on the person rather than the disability.

Need for the measure. According to the author, "Current language in the California Post-Secondary Education code is derogatory towards people who are disabled. Students with disabilities or students with specific differences (hearing, sight) are inaccurately referred to as "disabled students" or "deaf students.""

The author argues that, "Current law disenfranchises students with disabilities. The terms the Legislature uses to address people is a powerful signal to society about the values of the State of California. We must be explicit in our California Post-Secondary Code section that having a disability is only one aspect of a person's identity as a student."

This measure changes "disabled student" to "student with disabilities" and makes similar changes regarding specific disabilities throughout the EC provisions governing postsecondary education.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file.

Opposition

None on file.

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