

Date of Hearing: April 19, 2016

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 1995 (Williams) – As Amended March 14, 2016

SUBJECT: Community colleges: homeless students: access to shower facilities.

SUMMARY: Requires campuses of the California Community Colleges (CCC) to grant enrolled homeless students access and usage of campus shower facilities. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Specifies that if a CCC has shower facilities for student use on campus, the governing board of the community college district (CCD) shall grant access to the shower facilities to any homeless student, provided the student:
 - a) Is enrolled in coursework;
 - b) Has paid enrollment fees; and,
 - c) Is in good standing with the CCD.
- 2) Requires the governing board to create a plan of action in order to have homeless students access and use the shower facilities that includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:
 - a) Hours of operation for the shower facilities;
 - b) A student safety plan for shower facility use;
 - c) The minimum number of units a student must be enrolled in to use the facilities;
 - d) A plan of action if hours of operation conflict with athletic games;
 - e) A definition of homeless student that is based on the definition of homeless youth specified in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 11434a(2)), but also reflects the age of the homeless student population at the community college campus;
 - f) The fiscal impact of the program on the CCD; and,
 - g) Conducting outreach to homeless students at each community college campus to inform students about available resources offered by the community college and the community.
- 3) Requires through the Student Success and Support Program (SSSP), the administration of a program to provide shower facilities to homeless students, as specified.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes in federal law the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 to ensure educational rights and protections for youth experiencing homelessness (42 U.S.C. 11431, et seq.).

- 2) Defines in federal law “homeless children and youth” to mean individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, as specified, including children and youth who are:
 - a) Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason;
 - b) Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - c) Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
 - d) Abandoned in hospitals;
 - e) Awaiting foster care placement;
 - f) Inhabiting a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation, as specified;
 - g) Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and,
 - h) Migratory, as defined, and who otherwise qualify as homeless per this definition (42 U.S.C. 11434(a)(2)).
- 3) Establishes the Community College Student Financial Aid Outreach Program and requires the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) to develop and administer this program for the purpose of providing financial aid training to high school and community college counselors and advisors, as specified. Further requires the program to:
 - a) Include training to address the specific needs of community college students intending to transfer to a four-year institution of higher education, foster youth, and students with disabilities;
 - b) Provide specialized information on financial aid opportunities available to community college students, as specified; and
 - c) Concentrate its efforts on high schools and community colleges that are located in geographic areas with a high percentage of low-income families (Education Code (EC) 69514.5).
- 4) Permits CSAC to, via the Student Opportunity and Access Program, apportion funds on a progress payment schedule for the support of projects designed to increase the accessibility of postsecondary educational opportunities for any elementary and secondary school pupils who are: from low-income families, will be the first in their families to attend college, or are from schools or geographic regions with documented low eligibility or college participation rates (EC 69561).
- 5) Creates the SSSP in order to provide a variety of programs intended to ensure the success of CCC students (EC 78212).

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 the measure. According to the author, food and housing insecurity impairs the academic performance of college students. Students without permanent housing may go without showering and basic hygienic products. The author states, "Students are less likely to attend class when they do not take showers and feel insecure about their physical appearance." The author contends that homeless students who lack access to shower facilities and other necessities are at an extreme risk of dropping out of school.

This measure requires the governing board of a CCD to create certain protocols when authorizing homeless students to access and use campus shower facilities.

Previous legislation. AB 1228 (Gipson), Chapter 571, Statutes of 2015, extends priority for housing at the University of California, the California State University, and the CCC, to homeless youth, and requests campuses to develop plans to ensure that homeless and foster youth have housing during school breaks.

AB 801 (Bloom) of 2015, which is on the Senate Floor Inactive File, would, among others, create the Success for Homeless Youth in Higher Education Act.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Associated Student Body of Long Beach City College
California Federation of Teachers
North Orange County Community College District
Student Senate for California Community Colleges (sponsor)

Opposition

None on file.

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