

Date of Hearing: April 17, 2012

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Marty Block, Chair
AB 2093 (Skinner) – As Introduced: February 23, 2012

SUBJECT: Foster Youth Higher Education Preparation and Support Act of 2012.

SUMMARY: Establishes the Foster Youth Higher Education Preparation and Support Act of 2012 to provide comprehensive support to students at public postsecondary education campuses who are current or former foster youth. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires the California State University (CSU) and requests the California Community Colleges (CCC) and University of California (UC) to establish foster youth campus support programs to provide comprehensive support and outreach to current and former foster youth in an effort to retain foster youth in higher education.
- 2) Requests CCC, CSU, and UC campuses designate a foster youth campus support program coordinator using new or existing resources.
- 3) Requires the State Department of Social Services to annually notify foster youth 13 years of age and older, and those foster youths' caregivers, of the postsecondary educational support provided pursuant to this bill.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Grants priority enrollment for registration to any foster youth or former foster youth at CCC, CSU, and UC, should UC choose to comply. (Education Code § 66025.9)
- 2) Exempts foster youth from uniform residency requirements. (EC § 68085)
- 3) Grants foster youth priority for year-round student housing. (EC § 76010, 90001.5, 92660)
- 4) States legislative intent that UC, CSU and CCC disseminate information to foster care agencies regarding admissions requirements and financial aid, and requests UC and CSU explore methods of using the admissions-by-exemption category to assist the transition of student in foster care into four-year public institutions of higher education. (EC § 66019.3)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: This bill was approved by the Assembly Human Services Committee on April 10, 2012, by a vote of 4-2, where provisions pertaining to the State Department of Social Services were considered.

Need for this bill. According to the author, "Foster care students who transition from high school to college campuses have needs that differ from those of their non-foster peers. Student services personnel at most post-secondary institutions are unfamiliar with or unprepared to address the unique needs of this population."

Foster youth and higher education. In 2011, there were between 600 and 800 former foster youth attending UC, 1,200 attending CSU, and 6,500 attending CCC. According to a December 2005 report by the Institute for Higher Education Policy entitled, “Higher Education Opportunities for Foster Youth,” of the foster youth who complete high school and are college-qualified, only about 20% enrolled in higher education compared to about 60% of their peers. The report cites numerous factors that negatively affect degree completion by foster youth, namely lack of maturity and adult skills, dearth of information, poverty, no family support or home base, and inadequate financial aid, student services, and counseling. Recommendations to improve higher education attainment of foster youth include to raise expectations and pre-collegiate training in the K-12 system to overcome the psychological, social, and bureaucratic obstacles to higher education opportunities; increase funding for financial aid, counseling, and student services in the secondary and postsecondary systems; and simplify and consolidate scattered programs and procedures that complicate the process of obtaining benefits and education (American Youth Policy Forum).

Existing educational resources in higher education.

- 1) CCC Tuition Assistance. The CCCs provide virtually free tuition to former foster youth.
- 2) CCCs Foster Youth Success Initiative. Assists foster youth by connecting students with support services and financial aid to achieve educational goals.
- 3) Chafee Educational and Training Vouchers Program. This program offers up to \$5,000 per year to former foster youth under age 22 for post- secondary training.
- 4) Guardian Scholars Programs. Available on many CCC and CSU campuses, these programs offer housing, tuition, and academic support to former foster youth.
- 5) Other Campus-Specific Supports. Some state college campuses have designed local programs to support former foster youth with comprehensive support services from ensuring admission and retention to academic and personal counseling.

Comprehensive services are not defined. This bill calls on the segments to offer comprehensive support and outreach to foster youth but does not define this term. It is Committee staff’s understanding that the author is working with stakeholders on a definition to provide more definitive guidance to the segments.

Prior legislation. AB 194, Beall, Chapter 458, Statutes of 2011, granted priority enrollment for registration to current and former foster youth. AB 1393, Skinner, Chapter 391, Statutes of 2009, granted current and former foster youth priority for year-round campus housing. AB 1578 (Leno, 2007), which was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee, would have enacted the Foster Youth Higher Education Preparation and Support Act of 2007. AB 1532 (Bass, 2006), which was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee, would have exempted foster youth from all deadlines pertaining to the Cal Grant Entitlement Programs. AB 2489 (Leno, 2006), which was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee, would have provided first-year tuition and fee assistance to all Cal Grant B students who are current or were former foster youth, assistance with campus-based fees in UC and CSU, and campus housing priority for current and former foster youth in UC and CSU.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Omar Murillo, Individual

Opposition

None on file.

Analysis Prepared by: Sandra Fried / HIGHER ED. / (916) 319-3960