

Date of Hearing: April 25, 2017

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 453 (Limón) – As Amended March 23, 2017

SUBJECT: Postsecondary education: student hunger.

SUMMARY: Requires the California State University (CSU) Trustees, the California Community Colleges (CCC) Board of Governors, and encourages the University of California (UC) Regents, to designate as a "hungry free campus" each of its respective campuses.

Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the CSU Trustees, and encourages the UC Regents, to designate as a "hungry free campus" each of its respective campuses that have all of the following:
 - a) A campus employee designated to help students enroll in CalFresh;
 - b) A campus pantry;
 - c) A program at the campus allowing students to donate their unused meal plans for students in need. Moneys from donated meal plans not used by students in need shall be donated to supply the campus pantry; and,
 - d) A campus employee designated as a point-of-contact for the program described in (1) (b) to assist students.
- 2) Requires the CCC Board of Governors to designate as a "hungry free campus" each of its campuses that have both of the following:
 - a) A campus employee designated to help students enroll in CalFresh; and,
 - b) A campus pantry.
- 3) Stipulates that each campus that receives a "hungry free campus" designation pursuant to all of one or two above, shall receive an as-yet unspecified funding incentive.
- 4) Defines "program" to mean a student meal plan donation program.

EXISTING LAW: Establishes the Donahoe Higher Education Act, setting forth the mission of the UC, CSU, and CCC; and, defines "independent institutions of higher education" as nonpublic higher education institutions that grant undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees, or both, and that are formed as nonprofit corporations in California and are accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education (Education Code Section 66010, et seq.).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: *Background.* As of July 2016, the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimated that one out of every seven households in the United States is considered to be food insecure,

meaning that lack of money or other resources limits their access to adequate food. As awareness about the growing epidemic of food insecurities rises, limited research shows that the number of food insecure college students is particularly increasing.

According to the UC's 2016 Global Food Initiative, "Student Food Access and Security Study", recent anecdotal reports in the U.S. suggest that college students are not always able to afford food, skipping meals to pay for books and fees. Only a few small-scale studies of food insecurity on select U.S. college campuses have been conducted, and most have limited generalizability due to the use of data sampling. Said studies found that food insecurity among students ranged from between one-quarter to more than one-half of the students surveyed.

Purpose of the measure. According to the author, countless students are facing food insecurities. The author contends that the state must develop new ways to combat hunger.

The author states, "A recent study found that there is a divide between race and ethnicity when it comes to food insecurities. The study found that of those White and Asian students surveyed, 17 percent had very low food security; 25 percent of Hispanic or Latino students, and 28 percent of Black or African-American students had very low food security."

This measure creates parameters whereby California's public postsecondary education institutions can potentially become "hungry free campuses".

Segments' responses to student hunger.

1) *UC.* President Napolitano and UC's 10 chancellors, launched the UC Global Food Initiative in 2014 to build upon existing efforts and create new collaborations among the campuses and community partners. President Napolitano funded a UC Nutrition Policy Institute in order to conduct the Food Access and Security study – which enabled the UC to gauge the extent of food insecurity among students and to develop effective responses.

Each UC campus was initially allocated \$75,000 in 2015 to immediately support food access and enhance existing food security projects. Last year, President Napolitano approved additional funding of more than \$3.3 million over two years, including \$151,000 per campus, per year, to tackle food insecurity across the system.

To note, campuses have used their funds in various ways in order to combat food insecurities. For example, UC Santa Cruz used their funding toward increasing registration for CalFresh (the state's nutrition assistance program) and providing economic crisis support to students. UC San Diego established the Triton Food Pantry.

2) *CSU.* Chancellor Timothy White commissioned a study in February of 2015, to shed light on how CSU campuses were meeting the needs of displaced and food insecure students and to offer recommendations to ensure success and graduation for these students. The study found that 21 percent of CSU students consider themselves to be food insecure; however, CSU believes the number to be higher.

As of 2016, 11 campuses had programs for food insecure students, from small pantries to large food programs and services. Five campuses incorporate students' needs as part of student success directives. The study recommended that each CSU campus provide access to food for students who are food insecure in various ways, including, but not limited to, developing points

of contact to provide services on campus and off campus, providing peer support from students with similar experiences, and developing linkages with campus student associations and academic programs.

Many CSU campuses have successfully developed food pantries and community partnerships. CSU, Humboldt, in addition to its "Oh Snap! Food Pantry", has begun offering cooking classes and has developed an outreach program in order to increase students' enrollment in CalFresh. CSU, San Bernardino, in addition to its "The DEN" food pantry, also offers "Hungry Student Kits", which are bags of ready-to-eat and microwavable food and snacks to support a hungry student with one meal.

3) CCC. Committee staff understands that presently, there is no systemwide approach to combat food insecurities of CCC students. However, many campuses have opened or have plans to open food pantries and/or currently partner with local food banks.

MiraCosta College food pantry serves any MiraCosta student with either a snack, sack lunch, enough canned goods to get them through a day or two while they connect with community pantries, and when available, provides students with gift cards to the MiraCosta campus cafeteria or local grocery stores. Consumnes River College's food pantry, "The Hawk Spot", partners with the Elk Grove Food Bank and supports its students who have inadequate food resources.

Policy considerations. This bill requires and encourages the CSU Trustees and UC Regents, respectively, to have a program at each campus that allows students to donate their unused meal plans for students in need and specifies that moneys from donated meal plans - not used by students in need – should be donated to supply the campus pantry.

It is presently unclear as to how students would be able to donate unused portions of their meal plans and how moneys would be directed to the campus pantries.

Committee staff recommends, and the author has agreed to accept, the following amendment:

66027.8. (3) A **meal sharing** program ~~at the campus. The program shall~~ **that allow allows** students to **voluntarily** donate their unused meal ~~plans~~ **plan credit** for **use by** students in need **or to support an on-campus food pantry.** **Each campus shall establish the parameters of their meal sharing program and make them publicly available to students and interested parties. The program information made publically available shall include, but not be limited to, the following:**

(a) How to donate unused meal plan credits

(b) How a low-income student can apply to receive donated meal plan credits

(c) The methodology for determining how unused meal plan credits that are not used by a student in need, or food purchased using these unused meal plan credits, will be donated to support the on-campus food pantry.

Moneys from donated meal plans not used by students in need shall be donated to supply the campus pantry.

Additionally, this measure requires the CCC Board of Governors designate each CCC that meets the specified requirements as a "hungry free campus". While the CCC Board of Governors is the regulatory body for the CCC, it has limited authority over each community college district.

Committee staff recommends, and the author has agreed to accept, the following amendment:

The ~~Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges~~ **governing board of each community college district** shall designate as a "hungry free campus" each of its campuses that have both of the following....

This bill designates eligible campuses as "hungry free campuses". *Committee staff recommends, and the author has agreed to accept, amending all references of "hungry" free to "hunger" free in the measure.*

Lastly, the bill calls for a funding incentive for campuses that receive a "hungry free campus" designation. However, the bill is silent as to the monetary amount campuses will receive, how the funding incentive will be distributed, and who or what will serve as the fiscal agent to distribute said funds.

Moving forward, the author may wish to put more specificity on the funding incentive portion of this measure.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Food Policy Advocates
Gavin Newsom, California Lieutenant Governor
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
Swipe Out Hunger (co-sponsor)
Western Center on Law & Poverty (co-sponsor)
Young Invincibles (co-sponsor)

Opposition

None on file.

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