

Date of Hearing: July 11, 2017

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

SB 307 (Nguyen) – As Amended May 3, 2017

SENATE VOTE: 40-0

SUBJECT: Postsecondary education: task force: study of student housing insecurity and homelessness.

SUMMARY: Requests the University of California (UC) to convene a task force, consisting of three representatives from the UC, the California State University (CSU), and the California Community Colleges (CCC), selected by the governing boards of each segment, for the purpose of conducting a study to determine the extent, causes, and effects of housing insecurity and homelessness of current and future students. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requests the UC to convene a task force, consisting of three representatives from the UC, CSU, and CCC, selected by the governing boards of each segment.
- 2) Requires that one of the three representatives selected by each of the segments be a student who is currently enrolled at a campus of that segment.
- 3) Provides for the task force to be convened by the CSU, if the UC Regents decline to participate in the task force.
- 4) Requires the task force to do all of the following:
 - a) Select its members and have its first meeting by April 1, 2018;
 - b) Elect one of its members as its chairperson;
 - c) Conduct a study to determine the extent, causes, and effects of housing insecurity and homelessness of current postsecondary students and prospective applicants to postsecondary educational institutions in this state; and,
 - d) Submit the study to the Legislature by December 31, 2018, that includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:
 - i) An aggregation of the data between graduate and professional students and undergraduate students, to provide further context as to the resources and support services that are needed for each population of students; and,
 - ii) Findings and recommendations.

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 United States Code (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) Requests the UC Regents and the CSU Trustees to explore methods of using the admissions-by-exemption category to assist the transition of students who are homeless youth or foster youth into four-year public institutions of higher education (Education Code (EC) Section 66019.3).
- 4) 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).
- 5) 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 or UC campus 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).

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- 1) The bill's requirement for a task force to conduct the study on issues of housing insecurity and homelessness could result in one-time General Fund (GF) costs of at least \$250,000. This estimate is based on the cost of a similar effort currently underway by the CSU. Presumably, these costs would be shared equally among the UC, CSU, and the CCCs.
- 2) Unknown but potentially significant GF cost pressure to provide additional resources and support services for these students depending on the task force's findings and recommendations.

COMMENTS: *Background.* According to the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHYC), 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 a means to be able to enter 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 based on recent financial aid data, it is estimated that there are at least 57,000. 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).

Additionally, according to a March 2017 report by Wisconsin HOPE Lab, entitled, "Hungry and Homeless in College", while several studies of students' basic needs have taken place in California, the focus has been on California's four-year institutions. The report contends that there has not yet been a systemwide examination of housing or food insecurity at the CCCs. However, according to the Community College Equity Assessment Lab's 2017 report, "Struggling to Survive – Striving to Succeed – Food and Housing Insecurities in the Community College," data derived from a subsample of 3,647 students from various CCC campuses, found that 12.2 percent of students experienced food insecurity and 32.8 percent housing insecurity.

Lastly, according to a 2016 CSU study, "Serving Displaced and Food Insecure Students in the CSU", 24 percent of CSU students experience hunger and 12 percent experience homelessness.

Purpose of this measure. According to the author, "There is no comprehensive understanding of how the student homelessness/housing insecurity has impacted California students nor its causes."

This bill seeks to create a task force comprised of representation from all three public segments (i. e. the UC, CSU, and CCC) in order to study and determine the extent, causes, and effects of housing insecurity and homelessness of current and future students.

Segments responses to addressing the needs of homeless students. As noted in the "existing law" section of this analysis, current and former homeless youth have priority in receiving campus housing at the UC, CSU, and CCC. All three segments have initiatives, policies, and programs that attempt to address the needs of their respective homeless student population.

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. To note, the University of California 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.

Many CSU campuses have community partnerships with local entities in order to provide necessary services and needs for current and former homeless students.

Under existing law CCC campuses are required to grant access to shower facilities for enrolled homeless youth.

Legislative efforts to address homeless students. The number of homeless postsecondary students continues to grow. During the course of the past few years, the Legislature has sought to address the unique needs of these students. Legislative efforts include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) AB 1018 (Reyes), which is pending a hearing in the Senate Appropriations Committee, in part, requires the governing board of each CCC district to add homeless students to the categories of students required to be addressed in their student equity plans;
- 2) AB 1076 (Medina), which was held on the Suspense File in the Assembly Appropriations Committee, in part, required the Legislative Analyst's Office, in consultation with the UC, the CSU, and the CCC, to conduct a study on the implementation of existing law to ensure homeless students have housing when school is not in session;
- 3) AB 801 (Bloom), Chapter 432, Statutes of 2016, in part, extended priority enrollment to homeless youth, as defined, at the CSU and the CCC, and requested that the UC make the same extension; and, required the designation of a Homeless and Foster Student Liaison at each postsecondary educational institution participating in the Cal Grant program;
- 4) AB 1995 (Williams), Chapter 407, Statutes of 2016, in part, required CCC campuses to grant enrolled homeless students access and usage of campus shower facilities; and,
- 5) AB 1228 (Gipson), Chapter 571, Statutes of 2015, in part, extended priority for housing at the UC, CSU, and the CCC to homeless youth, and requested campuses to develop plans to ensure that homeless youth have housing during breaks.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California State Student Association

Opposition

None on file

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