

Date of Hearing: April 3, 2018

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 2990 (Low) – As Amended March 20, 2018

SUBJECT: Public postsecondary education: exemption from tuition and fees for qualifying survivors of deceased public safety and fire suppression personnel: notice

SUMMARY: Requires each campus of the California Community Colleges (CCC) and the California State University (CSU), and each campus of the University of California (UC) if so directed by the UC Regents, to place a link on the campus website, as specified, describing the availability of an exemption from mandatory tuition and systemwide fees for an eligible survivor of a state or local public agency firefighter or law enforcement officer who died in the line of duty, as specified under current law.

EXISTING LAW: Provides that no mandatory systemwide fees be required by the UC Regents, the Board of Directors of Hastings College of Law, the CSU Trustees, or the Board of Governors of the CCC from any surviving spouse or child, of a deceased person, who met all of the following requirements:

- 1) He or she was a resident of this state;
- 2) He or she was employed by a state or local public agency, or was a contractor, or an employee of a contractor, performing services for a public agency;
- 3) His or her principal duties consisted of active law enforcement service or active fire suppression and prevention; and,
- 4) He or she was killed in the performance of active law enforcement or active fire suppression and prevention duties, died as a result of an accident or an injury caused by external violence or physical force during the performing those duties, or died as a result of an industrial injury or illness arising out of and in the course of performing those duties. (Education Code Section 68120)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. State reimbursable mandate for community college costs.

COMMENTS: *Background.* The Alan Pattee Scholarship Act of 1970 was created in order to assist surviving family members of firefighters and law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty. The Act waives all mandatory tuition and systemwide fees at UC, Hastings, CSU and the CCC for these survivors. Chapter 435/Statutes of 2016 (AB 2164, O'Donnell) expanded the eligibility for this tuition exemption to survivors of firefighters and law enforcement officers who died as a result of an industrial injury or illness arising out of and in the course of performing their duties.

Purpose. According to the author, important information regarding the availability of the Alan Pattee waiver may not be readily available on each campus's website, per a recent survey of campuses conducted by the California Fire Foundation. The author is thus concerned that qualified public safety survivors may be unable to take advantage of this important benefit. The author notes this lack of notification can be especially problematic given that, in the years

following the job-caused death of a public safety officer, access to college can be instrumental in a surviving spouse's ability to effectively achieve economic stability for the family or for a surviving child to realize their full potential in the aftermath of their parent's tragedy. AB 2554 is intended to ensure that the website of every campus includes information about the existence of the tuition and fee exemption for these survivors.

Recommended Amendment. Since the Hastings College of the Law is included under the Pattee Act, it should be included under this measure's notification requirement.

On page 2, line 3 strike out "Each" and insert, "The Hastings College of the Law, each".

Related Legislation. AB 2554 (Bonta), also on today's committee agenda, expands the existing tuition and fee exemption to also apply to an eligible survivor of a firefighter employed by the federal government who was a resident of California and whose duty assignment involved performance of firefighting duties in California.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Professional Firefighters (sponsor)
California State Firefighters' Association
Camp Pendleton Professional Firefighters

Opposition

None of file.

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