

Date of Hearing: March 21, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Mike Fong, Chair
AB 320 (Lee) – As Introduced January 26, 2023

SUBJECT: Student Aid Commission.

SUMMARY: Expands the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) to include two additional student members. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Provides that CSAC shall consist of four student members, one from each of the following postsecondary educational institutions:
 - a) The University of California (UC);
 - b) The California State University (CSU);
 - c) The California Community Colleges (CCC); and,
 - d) A California private postsecondary educational institution.
- 2) Clarifies that the student member must be enrolled in the postsecondary educational institution the student attends at the time of appointment and during the duration of the term.
- 3) Clarifies that a student member who graduates with no more than six months of the student member's term remaining shall be permitted to serve for the remainder of the term.
- 4) Makes technical and clarifying changes to existing law.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes CSAC to administer California's student financial aid programs. The CSAC is comprised of the following 15 members:
 - a) Eleven members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate:
 - i) Three representatives from the general public;
 - ii) One representative from a California secondary school;
 - iii) Two student representatives each of whom must be enrolled in a California postsecondary educational institution;
 - iv) One representative from the UC;
 - v) One representative from the CSU;
 - vi) One representative from the CCC;
 - vii) One representative from a California independent college or university (ICCU); and,

- viii) One representative from a public, proprietary, or nonprofit postsecondary school located in California.
- b) Two representatives appointed by the Senate Rules Committee; and,
- c) Two representatives appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly (Education Code (EC) Section 69510).
- 2) Provides that student members appointed to the CSAC:
- a) Be enrolled in postsecondary educational institutions for the duration of the two-year terms;
- b) Upon expiration of the student member's two-year term, if the Governor has not appointed a successor, the student member may remain in office for one additional year or until the Governor appoints a successor, whichever occurs first;
- c) May not be enrolled in the same segment of higher education. The segments of higher education are designated as the UC, the CSU, the CCC, ICCU, and for-profit institutions; and,
- d) If a student member who attends a qualifying institution, as defined, is not the recipient of a Cal Grant award, will have their tuition waived up to the maximum award amount for that institution, for the duration of the student member's term of office (EC Section 69511).
- 3) Provides that the CSAC is responsible for determining the appropriate student organization for each segment, and each student organization is required to inform students within their respective segment of pending CSAC student member vacancies and each student organization is authorized to submit a list of three to five nominees for membership. A student member appointed to the CSAC may not be in the same segment of the outgoing or the other sitting student member (EC Section 69511.5).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. However, according to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations fiscal analysis of AB 1290 (Lee) of 2021-2022, a measure initially identical to this measure:

- 1) Annual costs of about \$10,000 in General Fund costs for CSAC expenses related to two additional student Commissioners.
- 2) Commissioners receive annual stipends totally about \$1,000 and annual travel expense reimbursements ranging between \$2,400 and \$5,400.

COMMENTS: *Background of CSAC.* The CSAC is comprised of 15 appointed Commissioners that represent higher education segments, students, community leaders and more. The Executive Team of CSAC works closely with the Commissioners in order to create policies, programs, and initiatives to assist students' ability to afford to attend college.

Student representation on CSAC. As noted in the *Existing Law* section of this analysis, existing law only allows for two student members on CSAC; the two student positions rotate among four segments, representatives may not be enrolled in the same segment of the outgoing or the other sitting student member. Additionally, existing law also requires that the two student representatives on the CSAC be enrolled in the student representatives' respective institution for the duration of their term.

Rather than rotating the two student positions among the four segments, this measure establishes four fixed seats; thereby ensuring that the student voice of each segment is present on the CSAC.

Purpose of this measure. According to the author, "The needs of students attending different institutions can vary greatly, as financial aid needs and experiences for a student attending a private institution can be very different than a student attending a California Community College, a California State University, or a University of California. By having one student member from each type of institution, the Student Aid Commission will better reflect the needs of all students."

The author contends that, "AB 320 will improve student representation on the California Student Aid Commission by adding two additional student Commissioners to the Student Aid Commission for [a] total of four student members, one from each type of higher education institution."

Lastly, the author states that AB 320 "Provides more opportunities for individuals typically not represented to have representation on the CA Student Aid Commission."

Committee comments. Committee Staff understands that increasing the number of Commissioners from 15 to 17, will raise the required number to establish a quorum and enable the Commissioners to conduct business. According to CSAC, with an increased number needed to establish a quorum, student Commissioners' vacancies tend to exist at a higher rate. The CSAC has found that for student Commissioners: 1) terms are shorter due to their school terms, leading to higher turnover; and, 2) currently, the CCC student seat is vacant and has been all term.

Moving forward, the author may wish to work with the various statewide student associations and groups in order to strategize best practices to ensuring timely appointments of student commissioners.

Prior legislation. AB 1290 (Lee) of 2021-2022, as heard and passed unanimously by this Committee on April 8, 2021, was virtually identical to this measure.

However, on June 15, 2022, this measure was amended to clarify that any person who steals, takes, or carries away a companion animal of another is guilty of theft. AB 1290 was subsequently chaptered (Chapter 546, Statutes of 2022).

AB 2154 (Medina), Chapter 457, Statutes of 2016, which, in part, provided changes to the term and benefits for service as a student member of the CSAC.

AB 2766 (López) of 2016, which was similar to this measure, was vetoed by Governor Brown with the following message:

“This bill adds two additional student members to the California Student Aid Commission, bringing the total student membership to four, and the total commission membership to 17. The current participation of the two student members should be sufficient to advancing the interests of students and protecting the public interest.”

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Association of Independent California Colleges & Universities (AICCU)

California Association of Student Councils

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

GENup

Student Senate for California Community Colleges

Opposition

None on file.

Analysis Prepared by: Jeanice Warden / HIGHER ED. / (916) 319-3960