

Date of Hearing: April 2, 2019

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 806 (Bloom) – As Introduced February 20, 2019

SUBJECT: Postsecondary education: homeless and former homeless youth.

SUMMARY: Removes the January 1, 2020 sunset, whereby current and former homeless youth are eligible for priority enrollment at campuses of the California Community Colleges (CCC), California State University (CSU), and the University of California (UC); aligns the definition of “homeless youth” to other provisions of existing law; specifies that current or former homeless youth are eligible for the CCC fee waiver; and, makes technical and clarifying changes to existing law.

EXISTING LAW:

Federal law.

- 1) Establishes 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 "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)).

State law.

- 1) Requires, among other provisions, institutions of higher education to designate a Homeless and Foster Youth Student Liaison and provides that homeless youth are

eligible for specific financial aid, enrollment priority (until January 1, 2020), and other services. Specifies that students' status as homeless must be verified by one of the following: (1) a homeless services provider; (2) the director of a federal TRIO or Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs program, or a designee of that director; (3) a financial aid administrator for an institution of higher education; or, (4) a designated homeless and foster student liaison (Education Code (EC) Sections 66025.9 and 67003.5).

- 2) Requires the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC), in consultation with the CCC Chancellor's Office (CCCCO), to establish the Community College Student Financial Aid Outreach Program for the purpose of providing financial aid training to high school and CCC counselors and advisors who work with students planning to attend or currently attending a CCC. Specifies that the training shall, in part, address the specific needs of homeless youth. Requires CSAC to administer the Student Opportunity and Access Program, in part, to homeless youth (EC Sections 69514.5 and 69561).
- 3) Requires the governing board of each community college district to charge each student \$46 per unit per semester. Waives the \$46 per unit per semester for several categories of students, including homeless youth (EC 76300).
- 4) Ensures that current and former homeless youth and 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 homeless youth and 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 homeless youth and 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 homeless youth and 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 homeless youth and 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 homeless youth and 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 and former homeless youth and 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 and former homeless youth and 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: Unknown

COMMENTS: *Background.* According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), insufficient housing undermines postsecondary educational experiences and credential attainment for many of today's college students. Data continues to remain sparse on the issue.

According to the GAO, as of the beginning of 2019, there are only 31 quality studies of campus food and housing insecurities, and of the 31, very few involve multiple colleges.

According to a March 2019 Report, entitled, *California Community Colleges #RealCollege Survey*, in 2018, homelessness affected 19% of students attending CCCs. Additionally, according to the CSU Basic Needs Initiative Study of 2018, over 10% of CSU students on average reported being homeless one or more times in the last 12 months. Further, according to the California Homeless Youth Project and SchoolHouse Connection, over the span of the last couple of years, one in 20, or 5% of UC students reported experiencing homelessness.

Need for the measure. According to the author, “Research shows that a higher education degree helps with job placement and greatly reduces the number of young adults that experience homelessness. AB 806 will ensure that the Legislature and state universities continue making great strides in providing the necessary support for homeless youth”.

Existing law allowing homeless youth eligibility for priority enrollment at the CCC, CSU, and UC, will sunset on January 1, 2020. Additionally, some provisions in existing law, are not consistent in specifying that current *and* former homeless youth are eligible for various benefits.

This measure removes the sunset, as aforementioned, and ensures that current and former homeless youth are eligible for the same benefits, as specified in existing law.

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), Chapter 751, Statutes of 2017, in part, required 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) of 2017, 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 statutes to ensure homeless students have housing during the time their respective campuses are not in session;
- 3) SB 307 (Nguyen) of 2017, which was held on the Suspense File in the Assembly Appropriations Committee, in part, requested the UC Regents to convene a task force, consisting of three UC representatives selected by the Regents, three representatives of the CSU selected by the CSU Trustees, and three representatives of the CCC selected by the CCC Board of Governors, to conduct a study to determine the extent, causes, and effects of housing insecurity and homelessness of current postsecondary students in this state, and required the study to be submitted to the Legislature on or before December 31, 2018;
- 4) 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;

- 5) 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,
- 6) 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 semester or quarter breaks.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Coalition for Youth (Co-Sponsor)
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (Co-Sponsor)
SchoolHouse Connection (Co-Sponsor)
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority

Opposition

None on file.

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