
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Benjamin Allen, Chair

2017 - 2018 Regular

Bill No: SB 307 **Hearing Date:** April 26, 2017
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Version: March 28, 2017
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Olgalilia Ramirez

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

SUMMARY

This bill requests the Regents of the University of California (UC) to convene a task force, consisting of three representatives from the UC, California State University (CSU) and 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.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Under federal law, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, defines homeless individuals as an individual or family:
 - a) Who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.
 - b) With a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.
 - c) Living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including hotels and motels paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations, congregate shelters, and transitional housing).
 - d) Will imminently lose their housing, including housing they own, rent, or live in without paying rent, are sharing with others, and rooms in hotels or motels not paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations; has no subsequent residence identified; and lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.

Unaccompanied youth and homeless families with children and youth defined as homeless under other Federal statutes. (United States Code, Title 42, § 11302)

- 2) Requires campuses of the California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC), to the extent the Regents of the UC adopt a resolution making this requirement applicable, and requests campuses of the California Community Colleges (CCC), in order to ensure current and former homeless youth and current and former foster youth have stable housing, to give priority for housing these students. (Education Code § 76010, § 90001.5, and § 92660)
- 3) Requires campuses of the CSU and UC, and requests campuses of the CCC, that maintain 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 current and former foster youth for residence in the housing facilities that are open for uninterrupted year-round occupation. (EC § 76010, § 90001.5, and § 92660)
- 4) 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. (EC § 66019.3)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requests the Regents of the UC to convene a task force, consisting 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, Trustees if the 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.
 - d) Submit the study to the Legislature by December 31, 2018, that includes, but 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.

- ii) Findings and recommendations.
- 5) Requires that the study be submitted in compliance with existing law.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “recent assessment by both the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU) identified significant homeless and housing insecure populations of students in each respective institution. However, these studies were conducted by imprecise means including a handful of on –campus focus groups, online questionnaires and self-reporting student surveys. These methods can lead to imprecise measurements and gaps in critical data. Student homelessness and housing insecurity in the UC and CSU are not mutually exclusive and deserve a unified assessment and solution. Without a comprehensive, scientific approach to analyzing all three public postsecondary institutions, policy makers are left with an incomplete picture of the true scope of student homelessness and housing insecurity.

The bill seeks to convene the UC, CSU and California Community Colleges for purposes assessing the effects and causes of housing insecurity and identifying resources and support services to help address the needs of students who are homeless.

- 2) ***Related CSU study.*** In February 2015, CSU Chancellor Timothy P. White commissioned a study to shed light on housing displaced and food insecure students. According to the CSU, students who experience food insecurity and housing displacement are invisible, and there is very little research on this student population. The report notes that about 10,000 students in California identified themselves as independent homeless youth on their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in 2013-2014. However, it is perceived to be a low count as many students are unaware of the status designation, are unwilling to designate themselves as homeless, or become homeless after the FAFSA is completed. Findings and recommendations from the first phase of the CSU study were published in January 2016. Finding and recommendations related to housing insecurity are as follows:

Findings:

- Staff, faculty, and administrators estimated displaced students at 8.7 percent and preliminary student survey results from one school showed a higher population at 12 percent.
- Only one of the 23 CSU campus system had a program directed at displacement.

- Students who experienced food and/or housing instability reported high levels of stress and the need for single points of contact.

Recommendations for California State University (CSU) System Policy and Practice:

- Ensure system-wide policy, institutional leadership, and sustainable financial support for training and support services for students experiencing housing insecurity.
- Further research on student experience and implementation of practice models.
- Advocacy participation by supporting federal legislation proposing to correct the policy shortcomings for students who experience housing displacement and by at system level support improvement of CalFresh enrollment policy for students, which can be prohibitive.

Recommendations for Campus Policy and Practice:

- Provide access to food and housing for students who are food insecure.
- Develop single points of contact to provide services on campus and off campus.
- Make financial aid administrators and housing staff and administrators critical partners in collaborative student affairs work.
- Develop linkages with Associated Students Incorporated (student government) and academic programs by including students in the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs.
- Peer support from students with similar experiences to provide resources and social solidarity.

CSU notes that funding for further research and piloting of programs is needed. Nonetheless, CSU is poised to continue this work as faculty at CSU Long Beach and Humboldt are currently working collaboratively to develop and implement an in-depth study of these issues at rural and urban campuses. Findings from a second study will be released in 2017.

- 3) ***Existing resources for students who are homeless.*** In addition to ensuring current and former homeless youth have priority in receiving campus housing, the three segments have initiatives, policies, and programs that attempt to address the needs of their respective homeless student population. University of California 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. Additionally, University of California (UC) 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 California State University (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 California Community College (CCC) campuses are required to grant access to shower facilities for enrolled homeless youth. Currently, there is no known integrated effort among the UC, CSU or CCC to address housing insecurity for California's student population.

4) *Technical amendment. Staff recommends* technical amendments as follows:

- On page 2, line 2 delete, "Regents of."
- On page 2, line 5 delete, "regents," and insert University of California.
- On page 2, line 6 delete, "Trustees of."
- On page 2, line 8 delete, "Board of Governors of," and insert Chancellor's Office of.

5) *Related legislation.*

AB 1018 (Reyes) would add homeless students to the categories of students required to be addressed in the student equity plans. AB 1018 is pending hearing in the Assembly Higher Education Committee.

AB 1076 (Medina) would require the Legislative Analyst's Office, in consultation with the CCC, the CSU, and the UC, to conduct a study relative current and former homeless youth by January 1, 2020. AB 1076 is pending in the Assembly Higher Education Committee.

SUPPORT

National Association of Social Workers

OPPOSITION

None received.

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