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# SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Benjamin Allen, Chair

2017 - 2018 Regular

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**Bill No:** AB 1567 **Hearing Date:** June 21, 2017  
**Author:** Holden  
**Version:** May 2, 2017  
**Urgency:** No **Fiscal:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Lynn Lorber

**Subject:** Public postsecondary education: California State University: California Community Colleges: foster youth: Higher Education Outreach and Assistance Act for Foster Youth

**NOTE:** This bill has been referred to the Committees on Education and Human Services. A "do pass" motion should include referral to the Committee on Human Services.

## SUMMARY

This bill requires each campus of the California State University (CSU) and the California Community Colleges (CCC), when determining that a student is a foster youth, to notify the student of eligibility for financial aid and campus support programs, and provide instructions on how to access those benefits. This bill also expands existing outreach to foster youth to include the sharing of data to ensure that foster youth are offered access and enrollment in programs offered by the campus.

## BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) States legislative intent that the Trustees of the CSU and the Board of Governors of the CCC expand the access and retention programs to include the following:
  - a) Outreach services to foster youth to encourage their enrollment in a state university or a community college.
  - b) Technical assistance to foster youth to assist those prospective students in completing admission applications and financial aid applications. (Education Code § 89341)
- 2) Requires the Trustees of the CSU and Board of Governors of the CCC to perform the following services to assist emancipated foster youth:
  - a) Review housing issues for those emancipated foster youth living in college dormitories to ensure basic housing during the regular academic school year, including vacations and holidays other than summer break.
  - b) Provide technical assistance and advice to campuses on ways in which to improve the delivery of services to emancipated foster youth.

- c) Track the retention rates of students who voluntarily disclose to the university or community college their status as former emancipated foster youth. (EC § 89342)
- 3) Requires the State University Educational Opportunity Program and California Community College Extended Opportunity Programs and Services to ensure that identified emancipated foster youth are informed of services, including mentoring, provided by these programs. (EC § 89345)
- 4) Requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) and county welfare departments, in coordination with the California State University (CSU) and California Community Colleges (CCC), to communicate with foster youth at two grade levels to facilitate the outreach and technical assistance efforts for those prospective students. (EC § 89346)
- 5) Requires the Student Aid Commission to provide outreach services and technical assistance to foster youth at the two grade levels designated jointly by the CSU and the CCC. Existing law requires DSS and county welfare departments to, in coordination with the Student Aid Commission, communicate with foster youth at the two grade levels designated jointly by the CSU and the CCC in order to facilitate the Student Aid Commission's outreach and technical assistance efforts for those prospective students. (EC § 89347)

## ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires each campus of the CSU and CCC to do all of the following upon determination, through receipt of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or through another means, that a student enrolled at or applying to that campus is a current or former foster youth and is eligible for financial aid:
  - a) Notify that student about appropriate campus support programs that may include but are not limited to the CSU Educational Opportunity Program, the CCC Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, and Cooperating Agencies Foster Youth Educational Support.
  - b) Notify that student of his or her eligibility for financial aid.
  - c) Provide that student with instructions for accessing the benefits to which he or she has qualified.
- 2) Requires the DSS and county welfare department, in coordination with the CSU and CCC, to share relevant data, upon acceptance and enrollment of the foster youth at a campus of the CSU or CCC, to ensure that the foster youth is offered access and enrollment in programs offered by his or her campus, including but not limited to the CSU's Educational Opportunity Program and the CCC's Extended Opportunity Programs and Services.

- 3) Requires the collection, reporting, and housing of data to be conducted both in a manner that ensures data integrity and security and that is in conformance with any federal and state laws relating to the confidentiality of student information.
- 4) Defines “foster youth” to include former foster youth and to mean a person in California whose dependency was established or continued by the court on or after the youth’s 16th birthday and who is no older than 25 years of age at the beginning of the academic year.
- 5) Deletes reference to “emancipated” foster youth to reflect the existing option for youth to remain in foster care up to age 21 years.

## STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Data shows that many factors contribute to poor educational outcomes for former foster youth, including the long-term effects of trauma, the negative experiences youth face while in the foster care system and the lack of adequate on-campus support for youth attending colleges and universities. Furthermore, a recent survey showed that former foster youth are often not accessing crucial resources in time to enroll and utilize while eligible. Evidence shows that those who access resources early have higher chances of achieving academic success. This bill helps to streamline the process by which a foster youth enrolls into educational assistance programs in a California Community College and a California State University. Furthermore, it ensures foster youth are offered access to enrollment of programs. By coordinating with financial aid offices on a college campus, students will receive notification of eligibility and auto enrollment into support programs.”
- 2) ***Existing outreach.*** Many of the existing support programs and services for which foster youth are eligible include outreach and recruitment components, such as Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, and Cooperating Agencies Foster Youth Educational Support, but often cannot access information about students’ foster youth status due to confidentiality concerns. For example, the California Community College’s (CCC) Foster Youth Success Initiatives, administered through financial aid offices, cannot necessarily inform the CCC Cooperating Agencies Foster Youth Educational Support (CAFYES) program that individual students are foster youth and therefore eligible for that program.

This bill requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) and county welfare departments, in coordination with the California State University and CCC, to share relevant data to ensure that the foster youth is offered access and enrollment in programs offered by his or her campus.

- 3) ***Related legislation.*** SB 12 (Beall) (a) requires the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) to work with the DSS to develop an automated system to verify a student’s status as a foster youth for the purposes of processing applications for state or federal financial aid; (b) expands the CAFYES Program from up to 10 community college districts to 20 community college districts; and, (c) requires the county child welfare case plan, for a youth who is at least 16

years of age, to identify the person who is to be responsible for assisting the youth with applications for postsecondary education and related financial aid. SB 12 is scheduled to be heard by the Assembly Human Services Committee on June 27.

- 4) ***Fiscal impact.*** According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, this bill would impose:
- a) Significant reimbursable mandate costs incurred by California Community Colleges (CCC). CCCs have limited capabilities to store and exchange the required data. This bill would require CCCs to identify, generate and track student specific guidance, and correspond with students about academic support eligibility, availability, and access at respective colleges. Statewide, CCCs would have to update forms/documents to identify students as foster youth and former foster youth and update online materials. The CCC Chancellor's Office estimates approximately \$4.5 million cost to CCC. These costs could be reimbursable should the Commission on State Mandates determine they are reimbursable state-mandated costs.
  - b) Minor and absorbable costs to the California State University (CSU).
  - c) Unknown costs to the Department of Social Services (DSS) and county welfare departments. However, existing law already requires DSS and county welfare departments, to coordinate with CSU and CCC to communicate with foster youth at two grade levels.

## **SUPPORT**

Journey House (sponsor)  
 All Saints Church Foster Care Project  
 Anti-Recidivism Coalition  
 California Catholic Conference  
 Children Now  
 Children's Defense Fund – California  
 Clothes the Deal  
 Coalition for Engaged Education, C/FORWARD Program  
 Crittenton Services for Children and Families  
 Echoes of Hope  
 Hillside  
 InsideOUT Writers  
 Junior League of Orange County  
 Junior League of San Diego  
 Junior Leagues of California State Public Affairs Committee  
 National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter  
 Youth Justice Coalition

## **OPPOSITION**

None received

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