
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Benjamin Allen, Chair

2017 - 2018 Regular

Bill No: AB 2990 **Hearing Date:** June 6, 2018
Author: Low
Version: April 5, 2018
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Olgalilia Ramirez

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

SUMMARY

This bill requires each campus of the California Community Colleges (CCC) and the California State University (CSU), and each campus of the University of California (UC), 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 surviving dependent of a deceased firefighter or law enforcement officer.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Authorizes the UC, CSU and requires the CCC to collect fees from students attending those postsecondary education institutions. (Education Code (EC) § 89700)
- 2) Provides that no mandatory systemwide fees or tuition of any kind be collected by the UC, CSU or the CCCs from any surviving spouse or child, natural or adopted, of a deceased person who met all of the following requirements.
 - a) Was a California resident.
 - b) Was employed by a public agency to provide active law enforcement or fire suppression/prevention services.
 - c) Was killed in the performance of active duty. (EC § 68120 et seq.)
- 3) Requires that any determination of eligibility, as specified, shall be consistent with any findings of the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board, using the same procedures as in workers' compensation hearings, as to whether the death of the person, as specified, was industrial. (EC § 68120.5)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires each campus of the CCC and the CSU, and each campus of the UC, if so directed by the UC regents, to place a notification on the campus website, as

specified, describing the availability of an exemption from mandatory tuition and systemwide fees for an eligible surviving dependent of a deceased firefighter or law enforcement officer.

- 2) Requires that the notification appear on the financial aid section of the campus website and include a direct link to the application for the fee or tuition waiver, as specified.
- 3) Establishes if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, the state shall reimburse the applicable entities.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** Existing law provides that no mandatory systemwide fees or tuition of any kind be collected by the University of California (UC) (if so directed by the UC regents), California State University (CSU) or the California Community Colleges (CCC) from any surviving spouse or child of a deceased firefighter or law enforcement officer who was killed in the line of duty. This exemption is known as the Alan Pattee Scholarship Act.

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. Consequently, qualified public safety survivors may be prevented from taking advantage of this important benefit.

Ultimately, such a disparity is 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.”

This bill seeks to ensure qualifying students enrolled at public postsecondary institutions are aware of their eligibility for the tuition and fee waiver under the Alan Pattee Scholarship Act.

- 2) ***Number of Mandatory fee and tuition waivers granted at CSU.*** As noted, current law prohibits public postsecondary institutions from applying certain fees to various groups impacted by a tragic event. According to CSU, in 2016-17 the system waived \$184,007 in tuition and fees for 34 undergraduates and graduates. Staff was unable to find similar data for CCC.
- 3) ***Related legislation.*** AB 2554 (Bonta), also on today's committee agenda, expands the existing tuition and fee exemption to also apply to an eligible surviving dependent 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.

SUPPORT

Western Association for College Admission Counseling
California Professional Firefighters
California State Firefighters' Association
California Fire Chiefs Association
Fire Districts Association of California

OPPOSITION

None received

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