

SB 940 (Beall)

Cal Grant Access for Foster Youth

Fact Sheet

ISSUE

The State of California continues to struggle to improve college outcomes among foster youth. By age 26, just 4 percent of former foster youth earn a Bachelor's degree as compared to 36 percent of the same-age population of young adults. Financial aid plays a key role in student's success, yet for foster youth attending community college in California, just 9 percent received the Cal Grant, California's largest financial aid program.

BACKGROUND

California's foster care system has made important strides in the last several years for older youth in foster care, including expanding access to housing and other support services. These important investments have not translated to improved outcomes in higher education achievement. Research has identified several explanations for the low rate of college success among foster youth, including high rates of disability, negative effects of multiple foster care placements and others. An additional key factor is that foster youth do not receive the financial aid to which they are entitled, most notably the Cal Grant, which provides up to \$1,672 for students attending community college, \$7,414 for a student attending a campus of the California State University system, \$14,302 for students attending University of California campus and \$10,756 for students enrolled at a qualifying private institution.

Multiple studies have shown that financial aid receipt positively impacts grade point average, transfer rates and undergraduate degree attainment, making it an essential college completion tool for foster youth. The current lack of access to the Cal Grant among foster youth can be attributed to three main barriers. First, foster youth receive less assistance preparing for college and do not submit the required financial aid application within one year of completing high school, as required. Second, the average length of time for a foster youth to complete college exceeds the four-year limit of the Cal Grant. Finally, foster youth attending community college often start school without completing a financial aid application, thereby missing the March 2nd Cal Grant deadline.

THIS BILL

SB 940 will improve post-secondary achievement among foster youth by increasing access to California's largest and most important financial aid program, the Cal Grant. This bill has three key provisions:

- First, remove the requirement that foster youth apply for an entitlement Cal Grant within one year of high school graduation and instead authorize foster youth to receive an entitlement Cal Grant if they meet other existing eligibility criteria and *have not reached their 26th birthday as of July 1 of the award year.*
- Second, extend the length of time a foster youth is eligible for the Cal Grant from 4 years to 8 years.
- Third, change the deadline for the Cal Grant entitlement application from March 2nd to September 2nd for foster youth applying to attend community college.

STATUS/VOTES

Introduced January 29, 2018

SUPPORT

John Burton Advocates for Youth (sponsor)
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce (sponsor)
2-1-1 San Diego/Imperial
All Saints Church Foster Care Project
Alliance for Children's Rights
Bakersfield College
Bill Wilson Center
Bunker Wilson, LLC
Butte College Inspiring Scholars
Cal State Fullerton, Guardian Scholars
California Alliance of Child and Family Services
California State University San Bernardino (EOP)
Renaissance Scholars Program
California State University San Marcos
California State University, Bakersfield's Guardian Scholars Program
Casa De Amparo
Central Valley Higher Education Consortium
Child Advocates of Silicon Valley
Children Now

Children's Law Center of California
Coalition for Responsible Community Development
Cosumnes River College
County of Santa Cruz, Human Services Department
Cuyamaca College
David & Margaret Youth and Family Services
Family Care Network, Inc.
First Place
Foster Care Counts
Fred Finch Youth Center
Hillsides
John Burton Advocates for Youth
Jovenes, Inc
Juma Support
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
Laney College
Leaders Involved in Creating Change-Cerritos College
Learning Rights Law Center
Mount San Antonio College
National Center for Youth Law
New Alternatives, Inc.
Norco College (3)
Path Scholars Program at CSU, Chico
Peacock Acres
Peralta Community College District
Persistence Plus
Power to Soar
Redwood Community Action Agency's Youth Service
Bureau
Reedley College
Reedley College-Madera Center
Sierra College
Silicon Valley Leadership Group
StarVista
The Community College Foundation
The Institute for College Access and Success
Ticket to Dream Foundation
TLC Child and Family Services
Transitional Youth Services of Santa Barbara County
Education Office (SBCEO)
United Friends of the Children
Unity Care
University of California, San Diego Hope Scholars
University of San Diego
Valley Industry and Commerce Association
Walden Family Services
Youth Policy Institute

OPPOSITION

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Staff Contact:

Estevan Ginsburg
Estevan.Ginsburg@sen.ca.gov (916) 651-4015

Sponsor Contacts:

Debbie Raucher
John Burton Advocates for Youth
Debbie@jbaforyouth.org (510) 593-8382

Paola Santana
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
psantana@lachamber.com (213) 580-7586