
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Connie Leyva, Chair

2019 - 2020 Regular

Bill No: AB 1278 **Hearing Date:** June 19, 2019
Author: Gabriel
Version: March 26, 2019
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Lynn Lorber

Subject: Public postsecondary educational institutions: public services and programs: internet website notification.

SUMMARY

This bill requires each campus of the California State University (CSU) and the California Community Colleges (CCCs) to include information about specified public services and programs on students' web-based student accounts.

BACKGROUND

Existing law requires the CSU Trustees, authorizes the governing board of a community college district, and encourages the Regents of the University of California, to designate as a "hunger free campus" each of their respective campuses that meets specified criteria, including the designation of an employee to help ensure that students have information relating to the CalFresh program. (Education Code § 66027.8)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires each campus of the CSU and the CCCs, and requests each campus of the UC, to include on the website-based student account associated with a student's attendance a notice of the following public services and programs:
 - a) The CalFresh program.
 - b) Resources, as determined by the institution to be most appropriate, for county or local housing services, which may also include resources for legal assistance relating to housing if determined to be appropriate for the geographic area where the institution is located.
 - c) Resources, as determined by the institution to be most appropriate, for county or local mental health services.
- 2) Requires each institution to include, immediately adjacent to the notices, a link to the webpage for each noticed program or resource.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, this bill “seeks to address issues of housing and food insecurity and mental health that students at our colleges and universities are facing at alarming rates throughout California. There are a number of reasons why students may not be accessing the mental health, housing, and food security services currently available. Many students do not know that these services exist for them or that they might qualify for them. For many, the current processes for qualification can be burdensome and even embarrassing. This bill would streamline the process for students to easily gain access to these services in a discreet and efficient manner.”
- 2) ***Getting information to students.*** This bill requires each campus of the California State University (CSU) and the California Community Colleges (CCC) to include specified information on the website-based student account. Each campus of the CSU and CCC maintains an online portal for students, or other electronic means to contact students, which is used by the campus to communicate with each student. This bill does not specify where each campus or segment is to obtain the required information, or to what level of detail the information must include (for example, basic information about the existence of CalFresh or a list of eligibility requirements).

This bill requires the notice to students to include resources for county or local housing services, including resources for legal assistance relating to housing. It is unclear what “legal assistance” entails, or how campuses will be familiar with such resources.

This bill informs and provides a link to students for services potentially available to them. This bill does not specify that only students who qualify for a service are to receive a notification. Students ultimately would need to determine if they qualify for services and apply for services.

- 3) ***Existing efforts.*** There are several systemwide and campus-based efforts to meet the housing and hunger needs of students. Examples include:
 - a) The CSU has a Basic Needs Initiative that includes an emergency housing or vouchers for off-campus housing, assistance with long-term housing arrangements, and emergency grants or funds.
 - b) The University of California’s (UC) Student Housing Initiative plans to add 14,000 new affordable beds by 2020; approximately 3, 600 below-market beds have already been identified. The UC’s Student Food Access Security and Basic Needs program includes \$3.3 million to help students regularly access nutritious food on and off campus.
 - c) The Hunger Free Campus Initiative was launched following its funding in the 2017-18 Budget Act. SB 85 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 23, 2017) established the “hunger free campus” program and appropriated \$2.5 million to the Board of Governors of the CCCs to provide grants to community college districts to be used to address student hunger at community colleges.

- 4) **Related Budget activity.** The 2019 Budget Act and accompanying trailer bills include the following relative to hunger, homelessness, and basic needs:
- a) AB 74 (Ting) includes \$15,000,000 for basic needs partnerships between the University of California, the California State University (CSU), and the California Community Colleges (CCCs) and the State Department of Social Services to assess the effectiveness of CalFresh and other state programs in addressing student food and housing insecurity.
 - b) SB 76 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review) includes:
 - i) \$2.4 million for allocation by the Chancellor of the CCCs to support the creation of a basic needs and veteran resource center at Sacramento City College.
 - ii) \$3.9 million for allocation by the Chancellor of the CCCs to community colleges to address student hunger needs and student basic needs.
 - iii) \$500,000 for allocation by the Chancellor of the CCCs to community college districts for a systemwide assessment of college-based food programs.
 - c) SB 73 (Mitchell) includes:
 - i) \$3.5 million to the CSU to support rapid rehousing efforts assisting homeless and housing insecure students, including the following: (1) establishing ongoing partnerships with community organizations that have a tradition of helping populations experiencing basic needs insecurity to provide wrap-around services to students; (2) connecting students with community case managers who have knowledge and expertise in accessing safety net resources; (3) establishing ongoing emergency housing procedures, including on-campus and off-campus resources; and (4) providing emergency grants for up to three months for students enrolled half-time and up to six months for students enrolled full-time.
 - ii) \$9 million to the CCCs to support rapid rehousing efforts assisting homeless and housing insecure students. The uses of these funds may include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) establishing ongoing partnerships with community organizations that have a tradition of helping populations experiencing basic needs insecurity to provide wrap-around services to students; (2) connecting students with community case managers who have knowledge and expertise in accessing safety net resources; (3) establishing ongoing emergency housing procedures, including on-campus and off-campus resources; (4) providing emergency grants for up to three months for students enrolled half-time, and up to six months for students enrolled full-time.

- 5) **Fiscal impact.** According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, this bill would impose:
- a) Minor and absorbable General Fund cost pressures to the University of California and California State University (CSU).
 - b) Minor and absorbable Proposition 98 General Fund cost pressures to the California Community Colleges (CCC). The state would need to reimburse these costs to CCC, if the Commission on State Mandates determines the bill's requirements to be a reimbursable state mandate.
- 6) **Related legislation.** AB 612 (Weber, 2019) expands the existing authority for the Department of Social Services to enter into a memorandum of understanding to prevent hunger among college students who are homeless to include the CCCs, and expands participation in the CalFresh Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) to include qualifying food facilities that are located on a campus of the CCCs. AB 612 passed this Committee on June 12, and is now pending in the Senate Human Services Committee.

SB 568 (Portantino, 2019) establishes, contingent upon an appropriation, the College-Focused Rapid Rehousing Program to provide housing options for homeless college and university students and to ensure that policies are in place at California's public postsecondary education systems to support students experiencing homelessness in transitioning into stable housing and remaining enrolled in college. SB 568 is pending in the Assembly Higher Education Committee.

AB 806 (Bloom, 2019) eliminates the January 1, 2020, sunset date on the granting of priority enrollment for homeless students in the CSU and community colleges, and extends this priority to formerly homeless youth, thereby extending priority enrollment for homeless and formerly homeless students into perpetuity. AB 806 also extends to former homeless youth several benefits and protections that are currently afforded to current and former foster youth and currently homeless students. AB 806 is pending in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 302 (Berman, 2019) requires the governing board of the community college district, if it has parking facilities on a campus, to grant overnight access to those facilities to any homeless student for the purpose of sleeping in the student's vehicle overnight, provided that the student is enrolled in coursework, has paid enrollment fees if not waived, and is in good standing with the community college district without requiring the student to enroll in additional courses. AB 302 is scheduled to be heard in this Committee on June 19.

AB 943 (Chiu, 2019) authorizes the use of funding from the CCC the Student Equity and Achievement Program for emergency student financial assistance to help an eligible student overcome unforeseen financial challenges that would directly impact the student's ability to persist in the student's course of study. AB 943 is pending in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

- 7) **Prior legislation.** AB 1468 (Chiu, 2017) was similar in nature to AB 943 (Chiu, 2019). AB 1468 was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

SB 307 (Nguyen, 2017) among other things, requested the University of California (UC) Regents to convene a task force, consisting of three UC representatives selected by the Regents, three representatives of the California State University (CSU) selected by the CSU Trustees, and three representatives of the California Community Colleges (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. SB 307 was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 2822 (Chiu, 2016) among other things, required the CCC Chancellor's Office to provide guidelines for community college districts or campuses that seek to establish student emergency aid programs among the services they provide. AB 2822 passed both houses of the Legislature but was not heard on the Assembly Floor for concurrence at the request of the author.

SUPPORT

Alliance for Children's Rights
Disability Rights California
Food for People, the Food Bank for Humboldt County
National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter
Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara & San Mateo Counties
Swipe Out Hunger
Yolo Food Bank

OPPOSITION

None received

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