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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Carol Liu, Chair  
2015 - 2016 Regular

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**Bill No:** AB 2154  
**Author:** Medina  
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**Urgency:** No  
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**Fiscal:** Yes

**Subject:** Student Aid Commission: student members

### SUMMARY

This bill provides changes to the term and benefits for service as a student member of the California Student Aid Commission (Commission).

### BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the California Student Aid Commission to administer California's student financial aid programs. The composition of the Commission includes:
  - a) Eleven members Governor appointees confirmed by the Senate:
    - i) Three representatives from the general public.
    - ii) One representative from a California secondary school.
    - iii) Two student representatives each of whom must be enrolled in a California postsecondary educational institution.
    - iv) One representative from the University of California.
    - v) One representative from the California State University.
    - vi) One representative from the California Community Colleges.
    - vii) One representative from a California independent college or university.
    - viii) One representative from a public, proprietary, or nonprofit postsecondary school located in California.
  - b) Two representatives appointed by the Senate Rules Committee.
  - c) Two representatives appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly. (Education Code § 69510)

- 2) Provides that student members appointed to the California Student Aid Commission (Commission):
  - a) Be enrolled in postsecondary educational institutions for the duration of the two year terms
  - b) May serve for six months beyond graduation.
  - c) May not be enrolled in the same segment of higher education. The segments of higher education are designated as the University of California (UC), the California State University (CSU), the California Community Colleges (CCC), independent institutions (non-profit), and for-profit institutions. (EC § 69511)
- 3) Provides that the Commission is responsible for determining the appropriate student organization for each segment, and each student organization is required to inform students within their respective segment of pending Commission student member vacancies and each student organization is authorized to submit a list of three to five nominees for membership. A student member appointed to the Commission may not be in the same segment of the outgoing or the other sitting student member. (EC § 69511.5)

## ANALYSIS

This bill provides changes to the term and benefits for service as a student member of the Commission. Specifically it:

- 1) Authorizes a student Commission member upon expiration of the student member's two-year term to remain in office for one additional year or until the Governor appoints a successor, whichever occurs first.
- 2) Requires an institution to waive a student member's tuition up to a specified amount, for the duration of their term in office, provided that the student is not a Cal Grant award recipient.
- 3) Requires the Commission to notify the appropriate student organization for each segment of a pending vacancy no less than three months before the expiration of the term and of the organizations opportunity to submit a list of nominees.

## STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the California State Student Association (CSSA), the sponsors of this bill, "for the past several years, student commissioners have faced challenges trying to serve on the commission while often also needing to work in order to pay for school." Additionally, CSSA asserts, that there have been instances of delayed appointments of student members, causing gaps in student representation. For example, the California State University student was selected for appointment in 2013, nearly seven months late and in 2014, the

private university student appointment was delayed by five months. Lastly, in 2011, a student was appointed to the commission after a four year gap. This bill seeks to ensure consistent student representation on the California Student Aid Commission (Commission) by authorizing students to serve for one additional year after their term has expired should there be a delay in appointing a successor and by requiring that institutions waive tuition for the duration of the student's term provided that they are non-Cal Grant recipients.

- 2) **Appointment of student members.** Existing law provides for two student commissioners from different higher education segments, nominated by the appropriate student association and appointed by the governor to serve on the Commission for two year terms. The higher education segments are designated as University of California, California State University, California Community Colleges, independent institutions (non-profit), and for-profit institutions. The student commissioners may not be enrolled in the same segment of the outgoing or the other sitting student member. This rotation of student seats by segment could be confusing to many if not adequately tracked. It is the responsibility of the student organizations to have knowledge of the process and submit nominees to the Governor at the appropriate time. Arguably, if a student organization is not aware of this opportunity it could delay an appointment or miss the chance all together. This bill requires the Commission to notify appropriated student organizations of a pending vacancy and of the organizations opportunity to submit a list of nominees.
- 3) **Commission service and benefits.** The Commission is responsible for administering financial aid programs for students attending public and private postsecondary institutions, colleges and vocational schools in California. Service on the Commission requires attendance at meetings of the board and assigned committees. The Commission meets at least six-times per year, in two-day meetings. Additionally, committees may meet more frequently. All commissioners are entitled to a \$100 stipend for each day of attendance at a regular or assigned committee meeting and compensation for board related travel expenses. Each student commissioner is a full voting member with the same powers and duties afforded to the remaining commissioners.
- 4) **Other boards by comparison.** Students serve on a variety of boards and commissions and each provides varying benefits to students who serve.
  - a) The California Community Colleges Board of Governors sets policy and provides guidance for the 72 districts and 113 colleges that constitute the system. The 17-member board meets at least six-times a year, in two-day meetings. The Governor appoints two student members (voting and non-voting) from nominees proposed by the recognized student organization. These student members serve staggered two-year terms with the non-voting student trustee succeeding to the voting position upon the expiration of the term of the voting member. Student members receive \$100 per diem and are compensated for board related travel expenses.
  - b) *California State University Board of Trustees* is responsible for the oversight of the 23 campus CSU system. The board meets six-times per

year, in two-day meetings. The Governor appoints two student trustees (voting and non-voting) from nominees proposed by the California State Student Association. These student trustees serve staggered two-year terms with the non-voting student trustee succeeding to the voting position upon the expiration of the term of the voting member. Student trustees receive tuition fee waivers, \$100 per diem and compensation for board related travel expenses.

- c) *The Regents of the University of California* governs the 10 campus UC system and meets six times a year, in two-day meetings. The Board of Regents appoint a student Regent (voting) and a student Regent-designate (non-voting) and serve one-year terms in each positions with the Regent-designate succeeding the voting student Regent. The student Regent is reimbursed for expenses incurred for attendance at meetings of the board and its committees, and all mandatory University fees and tuition are waived during the academic years in which he or she serves as Regent-designate and as a member of the board.

Arguably service on the California Student Aid Commission (Commission) is comparable to service on the Board of Trustees or Regents therefore it may be appropriate for the benefits provided by this bill to be extended to a student member of the Student Aid commission.

- 5) **Cost Impact.** This bill seeks to acknowledge that students who serve on the Commission merit a tuition waiver. The tuition waiver is solely based on service there is no test for financial need. However, given the small number of students that would receive such a waiver the cost would be insignificant. Staff notes that the tuition waiver only applies to non-Cal Grant recipients as student members who receive a Cal Grant would have his or her fees covered by the award.
- 6) **Related legislation.** AB 2766 (Lopez) would require the commission to include 4 student members, one from each of the public postsecondary institutions (University of California, California State University, California Community Colleges) and a California private postsecondary education institution. AB 2766 is scheduled to be heard by this Committee on June 8<sup>th</sup>.

## SUPPORT

California State Student Association  
California Student Aid Commission

## OPPOSITION

None received.

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