

ANALYSIS

- 1) Expands eligibility for the Chafee grant to include former foster youth who are between age 22 and 26 years, and authorizes the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) to award grants to this population beginning with the 2019-20 award year.
- 2) Requires the CSAC to annually report to the Legislature all of the following information for the preceding award year:
 - a) The number of students that apply to receive a Chafee grant award.
 - b) The number of Chafee grants awarded.
 - c) The number of students paid through the Chafee Educational and Training Vouchers Program.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Unlike most financial aid programs and grants, the Chafee Grant is crucial as it allows foster youth to pay for college-related expenses beyond tuition and fees, such as housing, childcare, transportation and books. Many eligible foster youth do not enroll into college immediately after emancipating out of the foster care system. Thus, they are unable to take advantage of the Chafee program. Extending the Chafee Grant eligibility age to 26 makes the standard consistent with the Cal Grant. This bill allow foster youth continuing or starting college after age 22 to access this grant. The Chafee program has been shown to improve outcomes for former foster youth: students who receive Chafee are 52 percent more likely to complete three semesters or more of community college. Chafee recipients also see an increase in the rate of course completion and the likelihood of obtaining a 2.0 grade point average or higher.”
- 2) ***Chafee eligibility requirements.*** To qualify for a Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV), students must:
 - a) Be a current or former foster youth, with dependency established or continued by the court between ages 16-18.
 - b) Be under the age of 22 years as of July 1 of the award year.

Students must fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or California Dream Act Application, and the California Chafee grant application. Currently, there is no application deadline or guarantee of funds, and applications are processed on a rolling basis until all funds are expended. This often results in students not learning whether they received a grant until well into the school term.

The Chafee ETV is not an entitlement, unlike the Cal Grant program.

This bill expands eligibility for the Chafee grant to include former foster youth who are between age 22 and 26 years, and authorizes the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) to award grants to this population beginning with the 2019-20 award year.

- 3) **Chafee recipients in California.** The maximum grant is \$5,000 per academic year; the average awarded grant in 2016-17 was \$4,149. There were 3,499 California students served by the Chafee grant in 2016-17.
- 4) **Related Budget activity.** The 2018 Budget agreement currently includes \$4 million General Fund (GF) in ongoing funding to provide Chafee grants to former foster youth up to the age of 26, and includes reporting provisions related to the Chafee. The Budget agreement essentially mirrors this entire bill; therefore, this bill is unnecessary and would chapter out AB 1811 (Committee on Budget), which is the human services trailer bill.
- 5) **Fiscal impact.** According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, this bill would impose:
 - a) Annual GF costs annually to expand the Chafee Program.
 - b) Ongoing GF in the thousands of dollars annually for CSAC to report on the grant.

SUPPORT

Journey House (sponsor)
Baby2Baby
Echoes of Hope
Public Counsel
University of California, Davis, Department of Anthropology, Research Affiliate

OPPOSITION

None received

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