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 B, 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 B within one year of high school graduation and instead authorize foster youth to receive an entitlement Cal Grant B 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 B from 4 years to 8 years.

- Third, change the deadline for the Cal Grant B entitlement application from March 2nd to September 2nd for foster youth applying to attend community college.

STATUS/VOTES

Passed Senate Education Committee, 5-0

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
Antelope Valley College
Bakersfield College
Bill Wilson Center
Bunker Wilson, LLC
Butte College Inspiring Scholars
California Alliance of Child and Family Services
County Welfare Directors Association
California Community College Chancellor's Office
California EDGE Coalition
California Student Aid Commission
California State University, Chico - Path Scholars
California State University, Fullerton - Guardian Scholars
California State University, San Bernardino - EOP Renaissance Scholars

California State University, San Marcos
California State University, Bakersfield - Guardian Scholars
California State University, Long Beach
Casa De Amparo
Central Valley Higher Education Consortium
Cerritos College
Cerritos College - Leaders Involved in Creating Change
Child Advocates of Silicon Valley
Children Now
Children's Law Center of California
Coalition for Responsible Community Development
Community College League of California
Cosumnes River College
County of Los Angeles, Department of Children and Family Services
County of Santa Cruz, Human Services Department
Cuyamaca College
David and Margaret Youth and Family Services
East Bay Children's Law Office
Family Care Network, Inc.
First Place
First Star
Foster Care Counts
Fred Finch Youth Center
Hillsides
Jovenes, Inc
Juma Support
Laney College
Learning Rights Law Center
Los Angeles City College
Los Angeles Unified School District
Mount San Antonio College
National Center for Youth Law
National Foster Youth Institute
New Alternatives, Inc.
Norco College
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
Regional Economic Association Leaders Coalition
San Diego County Office of Education
Santa Barbara County Education Office - Transitional Youth Services
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
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