

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 322 (Mathis and Garcia)

As Amended March 23, 2023

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires that each campus of the California State University (CSU) and the California Community Colleges (CCC) include in transfer and first-year student orientation specified information of benefit to veteran students and their dependents, develop and make available informational materials for those students, and requests the same of each campus of the University of California (UC).

Major Provisions

- 1) Requires, no later than the 2025-26 academic year, each campus of the CSU and the CCC, and requests each campus of the UC, to include within first-year student and transfer student orientations the location and contact information of the campus point of contact for students who are veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces and members of the California State Guard and the California National Guard, and their dependents.
- 2) Requires each campus point of contact to also to develop a document that includes information on policies, resources, and services for these students and their dependents.
- 3) Specifies that the document is to be available in hard copy form at the location of the campus point of contact and the campus is to post the document, along with the information provided at the student orientation, on the campus's website.

COMMENTS

Background. Over the past decade, the State Legislature has required that universities and colleges within California include certain information during student orientation to ensure the safety, health, well-being, and academic success of the incoming students, including information on sexual violence, cyberbullying, and CalFresh – amongst others. Similarly, the Student Equity and Achievement Program established the statewide goal to boost achievement for all students and ensure equal educational opportunities and to promote student success for all students, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, or economic circumstances.

Servicemembers, veterans, and their dependents often qualify for numerous federal and state educational benefits. However, the benefits the individual qualifies for will vary based on when and in what capacity the person served. For example, an individual who served on active duty in the late 2010s is eligible for different benefits than someone who served as a reservist in the 1990s.

According to the Author

According to the author, "AB 322 will ensure that each veteran and member of the National Guard is provided with information on the available resources and services, such as counseling, that the educational institution has to offer and receive the support, information, and tools necessary to succeed."

"Although many universities and colleges currently offer useful and potentially lifesaving veteran services, including staff, facilities and materials that assist with housing resources, disability accommodation, financial aid, peer mentoring, access to counselors and tutoring; many veterans and National Guard members are either unaware of these facilities, are not provided with practical information on how to access the available resources, or are not encouraged to use the services within student orientation. This critical oversight means that veterans and National Guard members are often required to seek out the services or ask for help themselves, which unfortunately commonly results in many veterans and National Guard members not receiving the assistance or resources available to them and struggling unnecessarily."

The author notes that, although many universities and colleges currently offer useful and potentially lifesaving services to veterans, including; staff, facilities, and materials that assist with housing resources, disability accommodation, financial aid, peer mentoring, access to counselors and tutoring. The author asserts that many veterans and servicemembers are either unaware of these facilities, are not provided with practical information on how to access the available resources, or are not encouraged to use the services within the student orientation.

Arguments in Support

None on file.

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations:

- 1) One-time and ongoing Proposition 98 General Fund costs of about \$135,000 to CCCs to update policies and procedures, add information to general orientation, develop a document, and disseminate the document in paper and online. This assumes costs of about \$1,500 for each of the state's 115 CCC campuses.

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.

- 2) One-time and ongoing General Fund costs in the tens of thousands of dollars to UCs to update policies and procedures, add information to general orientation, develop a document, and disseminate the document in paper and online. This assumes costs of about \$1,500 for each of the state's nine UC campuses.
- 3) One-time and ongoing General Fund costs in the tens of thousands of dollars to CSUs to update policies and procedures, add information to general orientation, develop a document, and disseminate the document in paper and online. This assumes costs of about \$1,500 for each of the state's 23 CSU campuses.

VOTES

ASM HIGHER EDUCATION: 12-0-0

YES: Mike Fong, Ta, Addis, Arambula, Gabriel, Irwin, Low, Ortega, Sanchez, Santiago, Wallis, Weber

ASM MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS: 11-0-0

YES: Soria, Davies, Addis, Alvarez, Boerner Horvath, Juan Carrillo, Mathis, Muratsuchi, Petrie-Norris, Ta, Valencia

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-1

YES: Holden, Megan Dahle, Bryan, Calderon, Wendy Carrillo, Dixon, Mike Fong, Hart, Lowenthal, Mathis, Papan, Pellerin, Sanchez, Weber, Ortega

ABS, ABST OR NV: Robert Rivas

UPDATED

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CONSULTANT: Kevin J. Powers / HIGHER ED. / (916) 319-3960

FN: 0000568