
SENATE COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Senator Bob Archuleta, Chair

2023 - 2024 Regular

Bill No:	AB 322	Hearing Date:	7/10/23
Author:	Mathis		
Version:	3/23/23 Amended		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Jenny Callison		

Subject: Veteran and California National Guard Supplemental Orientation Act of 2023

DESCRIPTION

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 to benefit veteran students and their dependents, to develop and make available informational materials for those students, and requests the same of each campus of the University of California (UC).

Existing law:

- 1) Requires the Trustees of the CSU, and requests the Regents of the UC, to provide educational and preventive information about cyberbullying to students at all campuses of their respective segments as a part of established campus orientations.
- 2) Requires the governing board of each CCC district and the Trustees of the CSU, and requests the Regents of the UC, to provide, as part of established campus orientations, educational and preventive information about sexual violence to students at all campuses of their respective segments. For a campus with an existing on-campus orientation program, this information shall be provided, in addition to the sexual harassment information required to be provided pursuant to subdivision (e) of Section 66281.5, during the regular orientation for incoming students.
- 3) Declares that:
 - a) Comprehensive information about acquaintance rape and other kinds of sexual assaults should be provided at all new student orientation programs and at any campus program that students are required to attend; and,
 - b) Colleges should provide special sexual assault seminars for all athletic coaches and administrators and members of athletic teams. These seminars should take place during a student athlete orientation program or prior to the first team meeting. Seminars should use the campus media, newspapers, radio, and television to heighten awareness of campus violence and its prevention.
- 4) Establishes that it is the intent of the Legislature that credit card and debt education and counseling sessions become a regular part of campus orientation of new students.

This bill:

- 1) Requires that no later than the 2025–26 academic year each campus of the California State University, and the California Community Colleges include within first-year and transfer student orientations the location and contact information of the campus point of contact for students who are veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States, members of the California State Guard or the California National Guard, and their dependents.
- 2) Requests that each campus of the University of California include within first-year and transfer student orientations the location and contact information of the campus point of contact for students who are veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States, members of the California State Guard or the California National Guard, and their dependents.
- 3) Requires that no later than the 2025–26 academic year, each campus point of contact included in orientations at the California State University and the California Community Colleges shall, develop a document that includes, at a minimum, information on polices, resources, and services, including, but not limited to, counseling, for students who are veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States, members of the California State Guard or the California National Guard, and their dependents.
- 4) Requests each campus point of contact included in orientations at the University of California, as requested, develop a document that includes, at a minimum, information on polices, resources, and services, including, but not limited to, counseling, for students who are veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States, members of the California State Guard or the California National Guard, and their dependents.
- 5) Establishes that no later than the 2025–26 academic year, each campus of the California State University and the California Community Colleges shall make that document available in hard copy form at the location of the campus point of contact, and post the document on the campus's internet website along with other information available to students who are veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States, members of the California State Guard or the California National Guard, and their dependents.
- 6) Request that each campus of the University of California make the document above available in hard copy form at the location of the campus point of contact described in subdivision (a), and post the document on the campus's internet website, along with other information available to students who are veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States, members of the California State Guard or the California National Guard, and their dependents.

BACKGROUND

Over the past decade, the State Legislature 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. This includes 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.

COMMENT

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.

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.

Prior legislation

AB 543 (Davies, Chapter 561, Statutes of 2021) required campuses of the CCC and the CSU Board of Trustees, and requested the UC Board of Regents to provide all incoming students with educational information regarding the CalFresh program, including the eligibility requirements, during campus orientation.

SB 366 (Chang, Chapter 146, Statutes of 2019) required the CSU and requested the UC to provide educational and preventive information about cyberbullying to students as part of established campus orientations, at all campuses of their respective segments.

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.”

POSITIONS

Sponsor: Author.

Support:

American Legion, Department of California
AMVETs, Department of California

California State Commanders Veterans Council
California Teachers Association
Military Officers Association of America, California Council of Chapters
Vietnam Veterans of America, California State Council

Oppose: None on File.

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