
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 1555
Author: Hadwick (R), et al.
Amended: 3/19/26 in Assembly
Vote: 21

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE: 7-0, 6/3/26

AYES: Pérez, Ochoa Bogh, Cabaldon, Choi, Cortese, Gonzalez, Reyes

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/13/26

AYES: Cervantes, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 74-0, 5/4/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Community colleges: exemption from nonresident tuition fee:
College of the Siskiyous

SOURCE: College of the Siskiyous

DIGEST: This bill authorizes the College of the Siskiyous to (1) exempt all or some of its nonresident tuition fee for 200 students per academic year residing in specified counties in Oregon and (2) claim state apportionment funding for students qualifying for an exemption of nonresident tuition fees.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the California Community Colleges (CCCs), a postsecondary education system in this state, under the administration of the Board of Governors (BOG), and specifies that the CCC system consists of community college districts (CCDs). (Education Code (EC) § 70900)
- 2) Authorizes the CCC BOG to enter into an interstate attendance agreement with any statewide public agency of another state that is responsible for public institutions of postsecondary education providing the first two years of college

instruction, and that is an agency of a state that is a member of Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), which is a regional interstate higher education compact between 15 states in the western United States. (EC § 66801)

- 3) Authorizes a CCD to admit nonresident students and requires that these students be charged a tuition fee, with specified exemptions, and requires that CCDs use one of several statutorily outlined options for the calculation of the nonresident tuition fee. (EC § 76140)
- 4) Exempts no more than 200 students in any academic year from paying all or part of nonresident tuition fees if they attend the Lake Tahoe CCD and reside in specified communities in the State of Nevada. (EC § 76140)
- 5) Exempts, until January 1, 2028, no more than 150 full-time equivalent students (FTES) from paying all or part of nonresident tuition fees if they are low income students who are residents of Mexico who register for lower division courses at specified community colleges near the California-Mexico border and who reside within 45 miles of the California-Mexico border. (EC § 76140)
- 6) Prohibits nonresident students from being reported as FTES for state apportionment purposes, except for specified instances, which include: (1) the CCD has fewer than 1,500 FTES, is within 10 miles of another state, and has a reciprocity agreement with that state or participates in the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) through WICHE; (2) if a CCD has between 1,501 and 3,000 FTES, is within 10 miles of another state, and has a reciprocity agreement with that state or participates in WICHE, the CCD can claim up to 100 FTES for state apportionment purposes; (3) the exemption for 200 students per academic years provided for Lake Tahoe CCD as specified in #4 above; and (4) the exemption provided for 200 students per academic year who are Mexican residents living near the California-Mexico border specified in #5 above. (EC § 76140)
- 7) Provides that specified nonresident students exempted from paying nonresident tuition may be reported as resident FTES for purposes of state apportionment and are required to pay 1.5 times the amount of the fee established for residents. (EC § 76140)

This bill:

- 1) Authorizes the College of the Siskiyous to exempt all or some of its nonresident tuition fee for 200 students per academic year residing in the Oregon counties of Jackson County, Josephine County, and Klamath County.
- 2) Authorizes the College of the Siskiyous to claim state apportionment funding for students qualifying for an exemption of nonresident tuition fees and requires the College of the Siskiyous to charge these students a per-unit fee that is one and one-half times the fee for residents.
- 3) Requires that the governing board for the College of the Siskiyous adopt rules and regulations for determining a student's residence classification and for establishing procedures for an appeal and review of the residence classification.
- 4) Requires that a student will be determined to have residence in one of the specified Oregon counties if they have lived in the county for more than one year immediately before seeking the nonresident tuition fee exemption.
- 5) Requires that residence be determined pursuant to existing laws for the determination of student residence, as specified.

Comments

Need for the bill. According to the author, “along the California-Oregon border, residents see themselves not as Californians or Oregonians, but as one cross-border community. Residents of this bi-state community in Siskiyou County interact daily with neighboring Oregon communities for work, healthcare, commerce, and education. Recent data indicates 90 percent of community college students go to college within 50 miles of their home. The CoS provides workforce programs that South Oregon University and nearby colleges cannot meet. ... However, Oregon applicants face significantly higher costs due to nonresident tuition and the total cost of college—often paying up to ten times more than California residents.

The author continues, “Assembly Bill 1555 allows the CoS to enroll Oregon students as in-state students. ... Current law already authorizes the Lake Tahoe Community College District to enroll an unlimited number of nonresident Nevada students in Lake Tahoe Community College as resident full-time equivalent students.”

College of the Siskiyous' proximity to the California-Oregon border. The College of the Siskiyous, located in Weed, is the northern-most CCC in the system and therefore the closest to the California-Oregon border. The next closest CCC is Shasta College, which is located roughly 70 miles to the south in Redding.

The Oregon border is about 50 miles, or an hour, to the north of College of the Siskiyous. Josephine County, Jackson County, and Klamath County—the three counties specified in this bill—are three counties on the southern Oregon border. According to the college, these counties were selected for this bill based on past enrollment trends at the college. In academic year 2025-26, the College of the Siskiyous enrolled 61 students from these specific counties and 112 students from Oregon in total.

Student housing at College of the Siskiyous. The College of the Siskiyous currently has co-ed student housing for 154 residents and are single, double, or triple occupancy. According to the college, roughly 60% of students living in the college's current student housing are Oregon residents.

In addition, the 2022 Budget Act awarded a \$32.6 million grant to College of the Siskiyous to construct new student housing as part of the Higher Education Student Housing Grant Program. As of May 2026, the 161-bed student housing project is scheduled to be completed in 2028, with the anticipation of a soft launch in spring 2028.

Reciprocity agreements and exchanges. The WUE is a program coordinated by the WICHE, and through the WUE, students from participating western states and territories from the WICHE may apply to enroll in college programs at a reduced tuition level. Existing law permits the College of the Siskiyous to annually serve a maximum of 100 FTES through WUE, which includes students from Oregon as well as other western states. Currently, the College of the Siskiyous serves 50 FTES from Oregon through WUE.

In addition, the College of the Siskiyous has a reciprocity agreement with the state of Oregon, called the Oregon Exchange, that allows the college to admit up to 50 eligible students who are Oregon residents to attend the college at a discounted rate. The reciprocity agreement also includes offering in-state tuition to eligible California residents attending College of the Siskiyous and seeking to transfer to, and attend, Southern Oregon University or Oregon Institute of Technology. Currently, the College of the Siskiyous serves 50 students through the Oregon Exchange.

For both of these agreements in the 2025-26 school year, students pay \$69 per unit (which is 1.5 times the resident fee) at the College of the Siskiyous instead of the out-of-state tuition of \$338 per unit.

Similar exemptions provided in recent years. SB 605 (Gaines, Chapter 657, Statutes of 2015) provided a nearly identical statutory exemption for students residing in specified communities in Nevada from paying nonresident tuition fees while attending Lake Tahoe CCD, with a sunset date of July 1, 2022. SB 436 (Dahle, Chapter 573, Statutes of 2021) removed the sunset date for the specified exemption for Lake Tahoe CCD.

In addition, AB 91 (Alvarez, Chapter 796, Statutes of 2023) exempts a maximum of 150 FTES from paying all or part of their nonresident tuition fees if they are low income students who are residents of Mexico who register for lower division courses at specified community colleges near the California-Mexico border and who reside within 45 miles of the California-Mexico border. This exemption is provided until January 1, 2028.

This bill seeks a similar exemption for students residing in specified communities in Oregon from paying nonresident tuition fees while attending the College of the Siskiyous.

Related/Prior Legislation

AB 91 (Alvarez, Chapter 796, Statutes of 2023) exempts, until January 1, 2029, from the non-resident tuition fee, a non-resident, low-income student who is a resident of Mexico, registers for lower division courses at specified community colleges near the California-Mexico border, as defined, and has residence within 45 miles of the California-Mexico border.

AB 1998 (Smith, Chapter 495, Statutes of 2022) (1) authorizes the CCC BOG to enter into the WUE through WICHE; (2) allows small CCDs located near a bordering state to charge a lower tuition rate to out-of-state students from WUE participating states; and, (3) decreases the per-unit fee for eligible resident students from three to one and one-half times the amount established for resident students.

SB 436 (Dahle, Chapter 573, Statutes of 2021) removes the sunset date of provisions in current law, authorizing Lake Tahoe CCD to waive non-resident tuition fees and claim apportionment for a limited number of students residing in

specified communities in the State of Nevada (in the Lake Tahoe Basin), thereby making the authorization permanent.

SB 605 (Gaines, Chapter 657, Statutes of 2015) exempts persons residing in specified communities in the State of Nevada from paying non-resident tuition fees if they attend Lake Tahoe CCD until July 1, 2022.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

The Chancellor's Office indicates that the bill would not result in additional Proposition 98 General Fund cost pressures since the College of the Siskiyous is already authorized to exempt nonresident students from the nonresident tuition fee and report these students as resident full-time equivalent students (FTES) for state apportionment purposes. Staff notes that to the extent the bill results in an increase in students above the statutory cap, this could lead to additional Proposition 98 General Fund costs under the Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF). However, such increases may be funded through future SCFF growth budget allocations.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/14/26)

College of the Siskiyous (source)
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
Community College League of California
Fairchild Medical Center
Student Senate for California Community Colleges

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/14/26)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 74-0, 5/4/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Carrillo, Castillo, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-

Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks,
Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Arambula, Bennett, Caloza, Chen, Gipson, Lee

Prepared by: Michelle Nguyen / ED. / (916) 651-4105
8/15/26 13:55:26

**** **END** ****