

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 2766 (Ahrens)

As Amended May 28, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires, instead of requests, housing priority at a California Community College (CCC) be granted to foster and homeless youth, and requires a CCC, California State University (CSU), and requests the University of California (UC) to waive or defer housing costs for foster and homeless youth until they have received their financial aid disbursement. It further expands priority registration for enrollment to foster youth to include those enrolled in the NextUp program at a CCC.

Senate Amendments

- 1) Provide clarifying and technical changes to the measure.
- 2) Add co-authors.

COMMENTS

This measure aims to achieve the following:

- 1) Require, rather than request, the CCC to provide priority housing for current and former foster youth and students experiencing homelessness;
- 2) Require CCC and CSU, and request the UC campuses, to identify eligible students in housing applications and publicize priority housing benefits on their websites;
- 3) Require CCC and CSU campuses, and request UC campuses, to defer housing deposits and fees until after financial aid is disbursed; and,
- 4) Align priority registration eligibility with the NextUp foster youth support program to ensure foster youth can access required courses and graduate on time.

What is NextUp? A student is eligible to be served by the NextUp program if the student is a current or former foster youth who was in care on or after the student's 13th birthday, is enrolled in at least nine units, and is not older than 25 years of age at the beginning of the academic term in which the student participates in NextUp. Students enrolled in fewer than nine units may be accepted if enrollment is part of an education plan designed to move the student toward subsequent enrollment in at least nine units.

The NextUp program provides traditional student support services such as orientation, in addition to outreach and recruitment, consultation and eligibility verification, consultation and referrals for students deemed ineligible, service coordination, counseling, book and supply grants, tutoring, independent living and financial literacy skills support, frequent in-person contact, career guidance, transfer counseling, child care and transportation assistance, and referrals to health services, mental health services, housing assistance, and other related services.

Age requirements for priority enrollment. Priority enrollment decisions are made at the campus level at each segment. The process allows specific students access to classes ahead of the general student population. Continuing students are generally allowed to enroll in courses before new students enroll. As such, students who have priority registration status have an advantage over other students. Under existing law, students who were in foster care on or after their thirteenth birthday and who are no older than age 25 at the commencement of the academic year, are eligible for priority enrollment at CSU, CCC, and UC.

Expands housing support for homeless and foster youth. This measure seeks to ease access to campus housing for foster and homeless youth by requiring CCCs, CSUs, and requesting UC to identify potentially eligible foster and homeless youth through the housing application process, defer or waive housing related costs, and maintain publicly available information regarding priority housing eligibility and benefits.

The deferral or waiver of housing related costs is effective until the students receive their financial aid disbursement. Students are required to submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California Dream Act Application (CADAA) as a condition for qualifying for fee deferral or waiver. Institutions are permitted to collect payment if the student does not receive a financial aid disbursement under certain circumstances.

According to the Author

According to the author, "foster youth and students experiencing homelessness complete college at far lower rates than their peers. Just 12% and 15%, respectively, earn a degree by age 29, compared to 49% of the general student population."

The author states that, "housing instability is a key barrier: nearly half of foster youth experience homelessness while attending community college and 25% while attending a CSU, and students without stable housing face greater risk of academic failure. For students with extremely limited means, even a small upfront cost like a housing deposit due before financial aid is disbursed can derail their path to stable housing. Foster youth also risk losing priority registration eligibility before completing their degrees, leaving them unable to enroll in required courses in time to graduate."

The author further states that, "AB 2766 removes key structural barriers that prevent vulnerable students from enrolling, persisting, and completing their postsecondary education. As someone who has experience with homelessness and the foster care system, I understand how difficult it can be to complete college without stable, secure housing. I also understand the transformative power of a college degree, and the vast potential for expanded opportunity it can create. This bill takes several simple yet impactful steps to promote academic success for former and current foster youth and students experiencing homelessness, providing crucial support to vulnerable individuals and promoting upward mobility."

Arguments in Support

According to the John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY), sponsors of this measure, "nearly half of foster youth attending community college experience homelessness, as do 25% of foster youth enrolled in the Cal State University (CSU) system. Research demonstrates a clear connection between a lack of stable housing and failure to persist in and complete postsecondary education. While the CSU system is required—and the University of California (UC) system is required upon adoption by the Regents—to provide priority housing to current and former foster youth and students experiencing homelessness, the California Community Colleges (CCCs) are

not subject to this requirement. As a result, students at CCCs—who make up the majority of these populations—face unequal access to stable housing, even as community college housing capacity has expanded."

Further, JBAY states that, "even where campus housing is available, upfront costs such as housing application fees and deposits, often due months before financial aid is disbursed, can create additional barriers. For students with little or no financial support, these upfront costs can block access to campus housing and, in some cases, prevent enrollment altogether."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Committee on Appropriations, pursuant to Senate Rule 28.8, negligible state costs.

VOTES:

ASM HIGHER EDUCATION: 9-0-1

YES: Fong, DeMaio, Boerner, Jeff Gonzalez, Jackson, Muratsuchi, Patel, Sharp-Collins, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Celeste Rodriguez

ASM HUMAN SERVICES: 6-0-1

YES: Lee, Calderon, Elhawary, Blanca Rubio, Ahrens, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Castillo

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 14-0-1

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Aguiar-Curry, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Arambula

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 77-0-3

YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

ABS, ABST OR NV: Arambula, Flora, Celeste Rodriguez

SENATE FLOOR: 38-0-2

YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, McGuire, McNERney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio,

Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson,
Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Blakespear, Limón

UPDATED

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