
SENATE COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Senator Bob Archuleta, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 587	Hearing Date:	7/14/25
Author:	Davies		
Version:	5/7/25 Amended		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Jenny Callison		

Subject: Student Aid Commission: membership

DESCRIPTION

Summary:

Replaces one of the public members of the Student Aid Commission, on the date that member's term expires, with a member who is a veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States and represents the veterans community.

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) and provides that it is to be composed of the following 15 members:
 - a) One representative from public, proprietary, or nonprofit postsecondary schools located in California.
 - b) One representative from a California independent college or university.
 - c) One representative each from the University of California (UC), the California State University (CSU), and the California Community Colleges (CCC).
 - d) Two members, each of whom shall be a student enrolled in a California postsecondary educational institution at the time of appointment, and shall be enrolled in a California postsecondary educational institution for the duration of the term. A student member who graduates from an institution with no more than six months of his or her term remaining shall be permitted to serve for the remainder of the term.
 - e) Three public members.
 - f) One representative from a California secondary school.
 - g) Two representatives appointed by the Senate Rules Committee.
 - h) Two representatives appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly. (Education Code (EC) § 69510)
- 2) Requires that each member of CSAC, other than a student member and a member appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly, have a four-year term. Requires that members appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly serve at the pleasure of the Speaker. (EC § 69511)
- 3) Requires the commission to do all of the following:
 - a) Report, on or before April 1 of each year, statistical data examining the impact and effectiveness of state-funded programs. The commission shall utilize common criteria in determining the impact of these programs, and shall have the authority to obtain any data from postsecondary educational institutions necessary for the reports. To the extent

practicable, this report shall specifically note the number and the demographic characteristics of the students who qualify for a Cal Grant award based on obtaining high school graduation or its equivalent pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (d) of Section 69433.9.

- b) Collect and disseminate data concerning the financial resources and needs of students and potential students, and the scope and impact of existing state, federal, and institutional student aid programs.
- c) Report, on or before April 1 of each year, the aggregate financial need of individuals seeking access to postsecondary education and the degree to which current student aid programs meet this legitimate financial need.
- d) Develop and report annually the distribution of funds and awards among income groups, ethnic groups, grade point average levels, and postsecondary education segments.
- e) Prepare and disseminate information regarding the criteria utilized in distributing available student aid funds.
- f) Be authorized to expend funds for the purpose of disseminating information about all institutional, state, and federal student aid programs to potential applicants. This distribution of information shall primarily focus on potential applicants with the greatest financial need.
- g) In the event that the Financial Aid Shopping Sheet developed by the United States Department of Education is no longer available, develop, in consultation with the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, a similar form that a postsecondary educational institution subject to the requirements of either Section 66021.3 or 94912.5 shall use. The form shall provide students and their families with information including, but not necessarily limited to, grant and scholarship opportunities and net costs associated with attendance at an institution.

This bill:

- 1) Changes the public membership of CSAC, from three public members to two public members and one member who is a veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States and represents the veteran community.
- 2) Makes this change operative on the date that a public member's term expires.

BACKGROUND

The California Student Aid Commission works toward a California that invests in education opportunity, fosters an active, effective, citizenry, and provides a higher quality of social and economic life for its citizens. The CSAC offers a variety of services with the mission of making education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians.

California is home to 75,000+ students affiliated with the military community. Members of the military and veterans community experience unique struggles that are difficult for people who have not served to relate to and advocate for.

- ~80,000 members of the military community attending CCC
- ~18,000 members of military community attending CSUs
- >2,000 members of the military community attend the UCs

(Members of the military community include veterans, active duty members, and dependents)

COMMENT

Veterans experience unique barriers enrolling and completing college. These include:

- 1) Cultural Adjustment: Veterans often struggle with adapting to the less structured environment of college campuses, which contrasts sharply with the hierarchical, mission-driven military culture. This can lead to feelings of isolation or disconnection from peers who lack shared experiences.
- 2) Identity Shift: Moving from a military identity to a student one can be challenging, especially for those who feel their service is undervalued or misunderstood in academic settings.
- 3) Complex GI Bill Processes: Navigating the Post-9/11 GI Bill or other benefits can be confusing due to bureaucratic delays, inconsistent information, or issues with certification. Some veterans are unaware of the full extent of their benefits or how to apply them.
- 4) Financial Instability: While the GI Bill covers tuition and provides a housing allowance, it may not cover all costs (e.g., books, childcare, or living expenses during non-academic periods). Veterans with families or those in high-cost areas may struggle.
- 5) Credit Transfer Issues: Military training and experience often don't translate into college credits, forcing veterans to start from scratch or take additional courses, delaying enrollment or increasing costs.
- 6) PTSD and Mental Health: Many veterans deal with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, or depression, which can deter them from pursuing higher education due to fear of academic failure or social stigma.
- 7) Physical Disabilities: Service-related injuries may require accommodations that some colleges are ill-equipped to provide, discouraging enrollment.
- 8) Family Obligations: Veterans with spouses or children may prioritize family needs over academics, especially if childcare or financial stability is an issue.
- 9) Relocation Challenges: Frequent moves (common for military families) can disrupt academic progress, especially if credits do not transfer between institutions.

According to the author: "The California Student Aid Commission is a testament of our State's commitment to creating opportunities for upward social mobility. It is in that spirit that we should continue looking for ways to innovate in order to best serve all of California's students. Our veterans can offer a unique perspective on their experiences traversing the financial aid system, to further improve these systems in California."

POSITIONS

Sponsor: Author.

Support: American Legion, Department of California
AMVETs, Department of California
California Association of Christian Colleges and Universities

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

Oppose: None on File.

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