

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 587 (Davies)

As Amended September 3, 2025

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Recasts the public membership of the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) to require one of the three public members to have knowledge, expertise, or experience in accessing the educational benefits available to veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States.

Senate Amendments

Specify that upon the expiration of one of three public members of CSAC, one public member must have knowledge, expertise, or experience in accessing the educational benefits available to veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States.

COMMENTS

Population of Active Military Personnel and Veterans in California. According to *Military OneSource*, a U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) website that provides resources on active-duty, National Guard, and Reserve service members, as of 2023 (most recent data available), there are over 4.4 million individuals who make up the total DOD force community, including over two million (45.7%) DOD military personnel, and over 2.4 million (54.3%) DOD force family members.

According to World Population Review, as of 2022, California had 158,754 active military personnel. Further, as of August 2022 (the most recent data available), according to the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics (housed within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs), California is home over 1.4 million veterans; making California home for the second largest number of veterans (Texas being home to the most number of veterans).

Military Affiliated Students in Public Postsecondary Education in California. Based on a compilation of data sets from the State's public postsecondary education institutions, the California Community Colleges (CCC), the California State University (CSU), and the University of California (UC), over 75 thousand military affiliated students are enrolled in one of the institutions.

Military affiliated students includes actively serving military personnel, veterans, and dependents.

According to CSAC, using 2024 data, 20,346 military personnel and veterans applied for a Cal Grant (the State's financial aid award); 5,979 were eligible for a Cal Grant, and 3,348 actually drew down on their award and received funding.

While these numbers appear to be low in comparison to the number of military affiliated students matriculating at the CCC, CSU, and UC, many seek to cover the costs of their collegiate experience drawing down on the GI Bill.

Current composition of CSAC. Since 1990, the Commission has had 15-members, comprised of 11 commissioners (members) appointed by the Governor representing five members

from the various higher education segments, three members from the general public, two student members, and one member from the secondary schools.

The graph below, from CSAC, depicts the current membership of CSAC:



Upon the date a general public member's term expires, this measure will replace one of the three general public member slots, with that of an individual who has knowledge, expertise, or experience in accessing the educational benefits available to veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States.

According to the Author

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 offer a unique perspective on their experiences traversing the financial aid system, to further improve these systems in California."

Further, the author contends that, "there is not however a representative of the military community on the commission. This group has needs that can't always be met by civilians. This is exacerbated since a large portion of this group is also first generation (about 62% according to the VA [Department of Veterans Affairs]), making navigating the financial aid field even more difficult. By adding a veteran to the commission we can 'use' their lived experiences navigating these systems to further improve them for all students."

Lastly, the author states that, "this bill will help to strengthen the veteran community's voice in California's financial aid process. CSAC currently manages certain veteran award programs, namely the California Military Department GI Bill Award Program. By including a member of the military community into the commission they can utilize their lived experiences navigating these programs to help further improve the system."

Arguments in Support

The following entities, the American Legion-Department of California, the AMVETS-Department of California, the California State Commanders Veterans Council, the Military

Officers Association of America-California Council of Chapters, and the Vietnam Veterans of America-California State Council (entities), in their letter of support stated that, "education is crucial for veterans as it helps them transition to civilian life, enhances their job prospects, and provides opportunities for career advancement. The Commission is the principal state agency responsible for administering financial aid programs for students attending public and private universities, colleges, and vocational schools in California with the mission of making higher education financially accessible to all Californians. Veterans need a seat at this table!"

Further, the entities state that, "many veterans entered the military directly after high school and upon discharge the majority are in the position of reentering civilian life in their mid-twenties or mid-thirties. This leaves them at a disadvantage when seeking to pursue higher education programs. Many have families and may be adjusting to multiple relocations because of the various duty stations they were assigned to. Some veterans have disabilities from injuries (physical and/or mental) received during their military service. They also do not have the direct-from-high school to college transition and support structure that traditional students enjoy. Because of the unique circumstances of this population seeking higher education or vocational training, it is essential that there be a representative on the commission familiar with the challenges faced by veterans."

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: 10-0-0

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

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

YES: Wicks, Sanchez, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Hart, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 72-0-7

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

ABS, ABST OR NV: Bryan, Chen, Lee, Nguyen, Sanchez, Sharp-Collins, Wicks

UPDATED

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