

Date of Hearing: June 23, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Mike Fong, Chair

SB 632 (Arreguín) – As Amended June 10, 2026

SENATE VOTE: 22-10 (but not on this version of the measure)

SUBJECT: Community colleges: California College Promise.

SUMMARY: Reduces the minimum unit requirement for California Community College (CCC) students to qualify for a California College Promise fee waiver from 12 or more units (full-time) to 9 units. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Reduces the minimum unit requirement for CCC students to qualify for a California College Promise fee waiver from full-time (12 or more units) to 9 units.
- 2) Provides that a student enrolled in fewer than 9 units can be deemed to have an “eligible workload” at the discretion of the institution if the student has been certified as eligible, based on a commitment by the student that is analogous to an eligible workload, by a staff person in the disabled student services program at the college who is qualified to make a determination.
- 3) Requires a CCC to provide, upon issuing an initial fee waiver to a student, a written notification to the student that includes all of the following:
 - a) A statement informing the student that the period of eligibility for a California College Promise fee waiver is limited to two academic years, as specified;
 - b) A description of the number of units a student needs to complete per semester or the quarterly equivalent, or the number of semester or quarterly units the student needs to complete per academic year, to complete an associate degree or certificate program within two academic years; and,
 - c) Information on how to access other financial aid opportunities available to a student who has exceeded their two years of eligibility for a fee waiver pursuant to this subdivision.
- 4) Defines “an eligible workload” to mean 9 or more semester units or the equivalent.
- 5) Makes clarifying changes to existing law.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the mission and function of the CCC, which, in part is to: 1) offer academic and vocational instruction at the lower division level for both younger and older students, including those persons returning to school; 2) authorizes the CCC to grant the associate in arts and the associate in science degrees; 3) requires the CCC to offer English as a Second Language instruction, adult noncredit instruction, and support services which help students succeed at the postsecondary level; and, 4) advance California’s economic growth and global

competitiveness through education, training, and services that contribute to continuous work force improvement (Education Code (EC) Section 66010.4).

- 2) Establishes a \$46 per unit fee for students at the CCC. Provides for a fee waiver for certain types of students, including those who meet minimum academic and progress standards adopted by the CCC Board of Governors (BOG) and have household incomes below certain thresholds established by the BOG or have demonstrated financial need pursuant to federal law (EC Section 76300).
- 3) Establishes the California College Promise, under the administration of the CCC Chancellor, to provide funding, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to each community college meeting prescribed requirements. Additionally, existing law:
 - a) Authorizes a community college to use that funding to waive some or all of the fees for two academic years for first-time community college students and returning community college students, as defined, who are enrolled in 12 or more semester units or the equivalent, or less for students certified as “full time,” as specified, and who complete and submit either a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or a California Dream Act Application (CADAA), except as provided;
 - b) Requires the CCC Chancellor to establish a funding formula that advances the goals of the program;
 - c) Requires the funding formula to include, for funding appropriated for the program in excess of the funding needed to waive all student fees, the number of full-time equivalent students at a community college and the number of students at a community college who satisfy the requirements to receive federal Pell Grants and the requirements to receive a specified exemption from paying nonresident tuition; and,
 - d) Requires the CCC Chancellor to submit a report to the Legislature by July 1, 2024, evaluating the use of funding for the California College Promise to waive student fees (EC Sections 76396-76396.4).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: *Gut and amend.* As introduced and amended in the Senate, this measure sought to establish a series of rebuttable presumptions that infectious diseases, cancer, musculoskeletal injuries, post-traumatic stress injuries, and respiratory diseases, including COVID-19, are occupational injuries for a hospital employee who provides direct patient care in an acute care hospital and are therefore eligible for workers’ compensation benefits.

However, on June 10, 2026, the contents were gutted, and the measure now seeks to expand the scope of the CCC College Promise Program.

Purpose. According to the author, “I am proud to lead the fight to expand the California College Promise Program to help our neediest students by expanding the ability of our community colleges to waive the fees for part-time students for two years. Existing law requires that a student be full-time in order to receive a fee waiver through the Program, which erroneously locks out our least advantaged students and perpetuates inequity and inequality at our community colleges.”

Fees and fee waivers at the CCC. Enrollment fees at CCCs are the lowest in the country (\$46 per unit), and are waived for almost half of all CCC students (this amounts to over one million students). For decades, this waiver was known as the BOG fee waiver and has existed since enrollment fees were established (1984) at the CCC and waives the per unit enrollment fee for any CCC student who demonstrates financial need.

The BOG fee waiver has been renamed as the California College Promise Grant (not to be confused with the separate California College Promise Program). Additionally, current law requires fees to be waived for surviving dependents of certain military service members and first responders.

California College Promise Program. In addition to the statute waivers (as noted in the *Fees and fee waivers at the CCC* section of this analysis), AB 19 (Santiago), Chapter 735, Statutes of 2017, established the California College Promise Program, which authorizes, *but does not require*, CCCs to waive fees for two years of college for first-time or returning full-time students regardless of financial need. To be eligible for these waivers, students must have no prior postsecondary coursework or have taken one or more semesters off from college coursework, enroll in 12 or more units per semester (which is considered full-time), and submit a FAFSA or CADAA.

Under the Program, colleges may also use their college program funds for a variety of other purposes, such as providing students with supplemental services.

The California College Promise Program was funded beginning in 2018-19 for \$46 million. Not all colleges receiving Promise funds are waiving enrollment fees; many believe their California Promise funding is better used for other purposes, such as strengthening student support services to boost outcomes, or providing grants to help students cover the costs of child care, transportation, books or other expenses. Under the provisions of the Promise Program, colleges receiving California Promise funds must engage in several outlined activities.

Among those activities: operating programs with local high school districts that support pathways to college; implementing the Guided Pathways framework; and helping students access need-based financial aid such as Pell Grants and Cal Grants.

This measure, in part, seeks to expand eligibility for the California College Promise Program to include community college students who are less than full-time students.

According to the CCC Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) 2025 California College Promise Program Report, from 2018-2023, \$375 million was allocated by the Legislature to CCCs for purposes of administering the California College Program. On average, 75% of the allocated funds were spent on direct student aid. Thirty-eight colleges spent at least 90% on aid such as fee waivers, book/computer vouchers, emergency grants, and transportation. Approximately 70% of CCCs used funds for fee waivers and approximately 50% for book vouchers.

How many? As noted above in the last two sections of this analysis, the California College Promise Grant and the California College Promise Program are two *different* programs, both which potentially significantly reduce the costs associated attending a CCC. The chart below, from the CCCCCO delineates the number of CCC students who have received the California College Promise Grant waiver, a California College Promise Program waiver, and Other Grant

(California Promise [AB 19] Source – which includes grants that can be used as fee waivers and other direct aid from AB 19 funds to students]:

Academic Year	California College Promise Grant Wavier	California College Promise Program	Other Grant: California College Promise (AB19) Source
2019-20	928,974	28,985	39,064
2020-21	802,674	34,445	52,740
2021-22	724,425	33,726	33,350
2022-23	727,295	38,623	37,139
2023-24	818,256	35,756	31,980
2024-25	859,161	37,349	41,188

The CCCCCO indicated that data for the 2025-26 academic year will not be available until the Fall of 2026.

California is home to the nation's largest higher education system, the CCCs, with 115 brick and mortar campuses and one completely online campus for a total of 116 campuses serving over 2.2 million students. According to the CCCCCO, from Fall 2021-2025 the percentage of part-time CCC students ranged from 63% - 65%; making part-time students well over the majority of students attending the CCC. Further, according to the CCCCCO, annually, between 8% - 10% of CCC students are non-credit and are not counted as part-time or full-time students.

Based on the data from the CCCCCO, approximately 25% of CCC students are full-time.

Completion rates at the CCC. According to the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) March 2026 fact sheet, titled, *College Completion in California*, degree and transfer attainment remain low at the CCC. According to the PPIC, among students that begin at a CCC, more than 60% declare a degree/transfer goal, yet only one-fifth of transfer-intending students do so within four years; 10% transfer within two years.

Committee comments. Many community college students attend part-time for myriad of reasons, including, but not limited to, the cost of living requiring them to work a full-time job and/or caring for a dependent(s). If the California College Promise Program is expanded to enable part-time students to potentially experience the benefits of the California College Promise Program, it may assist part-time students in taking more classes even if not equal to full-time status, thus potentially reducing their time to degree or transfer.

However, it could also increase their time to degree or transfer because it removes the incentive that currently exists – being enrolled full-time – in order to benefit from the waiver.

Additionally, while it is presently unknown the exact costs associated with expanding the California College Promise Program to everyone, regardless of enrollment status or financial need, it is also unknown where the funds to expand this program will come from.

Moving forward, the author may wish to work with the appropriate stakeholders in order to determine if it is prudent to augment the Program for all part-time CCC students or perhaps augment just for part-time CCC students who have a proven financial need.

Arguments in support. According to the Los Angeles College Faculty Guild, Local 1521, “the College Promise Program offers financial support to districts interested in creating or expanding Promise Programs that include partnerships aligned with local K-12 school districts, community colleges, and public university systems to create a clear pathway for students to reach their educational goals. Almost every community college in the state participates in this program but unfortunately these funds are not accessible to students who are not carrying less than a 12-unit course load. This legislation would expand the resources available through the College Promise Program to the part-time students, who represent the majority of community college students.”

Prior legislation. AB 537 (Ahrens) of 2025, which was held on the Suspense File in the Senate Committee on Appropriations, is substantially similar to this measure.

AB 1035 (Mark González) of 2025, which was held on the Suspense File in the Assembly Committee on Appropriations, in part, authorizes the expansion of the community college enrollment fee waiver that students are eligible for under the California College Promise Program by an additional two years of full-time attendance for a student enrolled in a community college baccalaureate degree program for a total of four years of eligibility.

AB 1342 (Megan Dahle), Chapter 102, Statutes of 2023, deems a student as a first-time CCC student for purposes of qualifying for a California College Promise Program fee waiver, even if that student had been enrolled in a CCC through a dual enrollment program in high school.

AB 2 (Santiago, et al.), Chapter 509, Statutes of 2019, expands the California Promise Program, allowing a student enrolled in fewer than 12 units, and part of the Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS), to be considered a full-time student for purposes of eligibility for the California College Promise Program.

SB 77 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review) Chapter 53, Statutes of 2019, which is the higher education budget trailer bill, includes the statutory changes necessary to expand the California College Promise Program for a second academic year.

AB 19 (Santiago), Chapter 735, Statutes of 2017, establishes the California College Promise Program, to be administered by the CCCCO which must distribute funding, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to each community college meeting the specified requirements to be used to accomplish certain goals and waive the \$46 per unit fee for one academic year for first-time students.

AB 1741 (Freddie Rodriguez and O'Donnell), Chapter 434, Statutes of 2016, in part, until January 1, 2021, establishes the California College Promise Innovation Grant Program to be administered by the CCC Chancellor's Office. The Program would support the CCC in establishing or expanding regional programs to address college preparedness, attendance, and

graduation in partnership with school districts and public postsecondary universities in California.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**Support**

California School Employees Association
Los Angeles College Faculty Guild, Local 1521
San Diego Community College District

Opposition

None on file based on this version of the measure.

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