

SENATE THIRD READING

SB 632 (Arreguín)

As Amended June 10, 2026

Majority vote

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.

Major Provisions

- 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.

COMMENTS

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 Board of Governors (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 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or a California Dream Act Application (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. 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.

Please refer to the policy committee analysis for further information regarding 'how many.'

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.

According to the Author

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."

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."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file based on the current version of the measure.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations:

- 1) Ongoing Proposition 98 General Fund cost pressures of an unknown, but potentially significant amount, possibly in the millions of dollars for the CCCs, collectively statewide, to provide fee waivers to part-time students under the California College Promise Program.
- 2) One-time Proposition 98 General Fund costs in the tens of thousands of dollars for the CCCs, collectively statewide, to develop and provide information to students regarding the benefits of full-time enrollment.

VOTES

SENATE FLOOR: 22-10-8

YES: Allen, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Caballero, Cervantes, Cortese, Durazo, Gonzalez, Hurtado, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Padilla, Pérez, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Umberg, Wahab, Wiener

NO: Alvarado-Gil, Choi, Dahle, Grove, Jones, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Seyarto, Strickland, Valladares

ABS, ABST OR NV: Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Grayson, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Weber Pierson

ASM HIGHER EDUCATION: 9-0-1

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

ABS, ABST OR NV: Muratsuchi

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

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

UPDATED

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