

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 892 (Grove) – As Amended February 23, 2026

Policy Committee: Higher Education

Vote: 10 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill, beginning July 1, 2027, requires a campus of the California State University (CSU), and of the California Community Colleges (CCC), and requests a campus of the University of California (UC), that administer a priority enrollment system, to provide priority enrollment registration to any California resident member or former member of the Armed Forces of the United States, without regard to number of years removed from state or federal active duty and without limitation on the number of years a student may receive priority status.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Minor and absorbable costs to the campuses of the CCCs, CSU, and UC.

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

Veterans and State Guard members have earned every opportunity to succeed when they return to civilian life. Many do not have the ability to enroll in college immediately after their service because they are working, raising families, or addressing health needs. They should not lose access to priority registration simply because life required them to wait. SB 892 ensures that priority registration is available whenever a veteran is ready to pursue higher education. By aligning California policy with the Federal Forever GI Bill, this measure guarantees that those who served our country can access the classes they need on a timeline that works for them.

2) **Background.** The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) administers the College Fee Waiver for Veteran Dependents (CalVet fee waiver), which waives mandatory system-wide tuition and fees at any CCC, CSU, or UC campus. This program does not cover the expense of books, parking, or room and board. The waiver defines an eligible recipient as the natural or adopted child or stepchild of a veteran with a service-connected disability or who died in service, the unmarried surviving spouse of a veteran, the spouse of a permanently disabled veteran, or a Medal of Honor recipient and their children. Similarly, the federal GI bill provides education benefits, such as coverage for in-state rates of tuition and fees, a monthly housing allowance, and a book stipend to military veterans and, in some cases, their dependents.

Current law requires the CSU and CCC, and requests the UC, to provide students who were members of the United States armed forces with priority enrollment, up to 15 years after leaving state or federal active duty. The bill removes the post-military service time limit of 15 years for priority enrollment eligibility for former members of the United States armed forces, beginning July 1, 2027.

- 3) **Related Legislation.** AB 2203 (Tangipa), of the current legislative session, requires the CSU and CCC, and requests the UC, to provide priority enrollment to a student who receives a CalVet fee waiver or who is using any federal GI Bill benefits, beginning with the 2028-29 academic year.

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