

AB 1228 (Gipson and Atkins)

Homeless Youth – Housing Priority in Higher Education

SUMMARY

AB 1228 promotes the attainment of higher education for homeless youth by: (1) establishing a priority for campus housing at California Community Colleges (CCC), the California State Universities (CSU), and University of California (UC) campuses; (2) requiring CSU and UC to develop plans that make on-campus housing accessible to homeless and foster youth during breaks; and (3) expanding use of the “admissions-by-exemption” category for homeless youth.

BACKGROUND

Research demonstrates that educational attainment is a key determinant of whether homeless and foster youth thrive as self-sufficient adults. Research also shows that low educational attainment leads to poor outcomes for these youth, including lower earnings, poor health outcomes, and higher rates of incarceration and reliance on public assistance.

Unfortunately, homeless and foster youth face a myriad of challenges impeding their educational success. A very low percentage of foster and homeless youth ever enroll in higher education, and the few that do historically have much lower graduation rates than their housed counterparts.

For those that do access higher education, challenges follow them to university campuses. In addition to lacking parental and financial support, many live in vehicles or shelters. Ensuring that their basic housing needs are met will help them focus on their education, improving graduation rates and self-sufficiency.

EXISTING LAW

The Legislature has previously acknowledged these barriers to higher education exist for *foster youth*. Current law requests campuses of CCC, and requires campuses of CSU and UC to give priority for campus housing to current and former foster youth. It further encourages campuses of CCC, and requires campuses of CSU and UC that offer

student housing year-round or during breaks to give first priority for that housing to current and former foster youth.

Current law also requests regents and trustees of CSU and UC to explore ways to use the “admissions-by-exemption” category to promote access to 4-year higher education for foster youth.

Current law does not extend these provisions to homeless youth, despite the fact that the barriers faced by homeless youth are the same, and in many cases greater than those faced by foster youth.

AB 1228

AB 1228 would apply the aforementioned provisions of housing priority and admissions-by-exemption to homeless youth under the age of 25 as defined by the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. AB 1228 also sets forth a process for ensuring that any youth seeking this educational assistance is verified to meet the definition of the Act by specified service providers and financial aid officers who would be in a position to know that the youth qualifies.

AB 1228 would also request CCC, and require CSU and UC to develop a plan to ensure that current and former homeless and foster youth can access campus housing during breaks and academic terms.

SUPPORT

- Housing California (Co-Sponsor)
- National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (Co-Sponsor)
- California Coalition for Youth (Co-Sponsor)

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