

SB 12 (Beall) – FACT SHEET

Foster Youth in Higher Education

BACKGROUND

California's foster care system has made important strides in the last several years for older youth in foster care, like providing more access to housing and other support services. One area where the state continues to struggle is post-secondary achievement among foster youth. By age 26, just 4 percent of former foster youth complete a college degree as compared to 36 percent of the same-age population of young adults.

PROBLEM

Research has identified several explanations for the low rate of post-secondary achievement, including high rates of disability, negative effects of foster care placement, etc. While these are important, an additional key factor is that foster youth disproportionately do not receive the financial aid they are entitled to due to a cumbersome verification process. A 2015 study of foster youth attending community college found that just 50 percent received the federal Pell Grant, even though almost all foster youth students qualify. Evidence shows that financial aid support is a strong predictor of degree attainment among vulnerable students, especially the foster youth population.

Another barrier that foster youth students face is completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) from the start. The state has failed to ensure that foster youth make an informed and supported transition from K-12 to post-secondary education and completing the FAFSA form is the first step to attaining financial support for college fees. There is also a lack of on-campus services for foster youth that could provide that essential support throughout their college experience.

THIS BILL

Given the statistics on the impact of financial aid and the need to provide other support services for foster youth, the focus of this bill is to improve post-secondary achievement among foster youth by increasing the rate of financial aid awards, provide assistance to complete necessary post-secondary documents, and increase access to on-campus based services.

This bill has three key provisions:

- First, every county child welfare agency would be required to identify a person to assist foster youth with applications for postsecondary education and financial aid.
- Second, streamline the financial aid verification process for foster youth who apply through FAFSA.
- Third, expand an existing on-campus based support program from the current level of 10 community college districts to up to 20 districts, thereby enabling more foster youth to receive the support they need to succeed.

SPONSORS

John Burton Advocates for Youth

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Staff Contact:

Carla Saporta (916) 651-4015
carla.saporta@sen.ca.gov

Sponsor Contact:

Debbie Raucher (510) 593-8382
Debbie@jbaforyouth.org

SUPPORT

Abode Services
Advokids
All Saints Church Foster Care Project
Alliance for Children's Rights
Aspiranet
Bill Wilson Center
Boys and Men of Color
Butte College Financial Aid and Special Programs
Butte College Inspiring Scholars
Cabrillo College Guardian Scholars Program
California Alliance of Child and Family Services
California Community Colleges Student Financial Aid Administrators Association
California State University Monterey Bay, Early Outreach and Support Programs
California State University Monterey Bay Guardian Scholars Program
California State University San Marcos ACE Scholars Services
California Student Aid Commission
Casa de Amparo
Cerritos College Leaders INvolved in Creating change (LINC) Program
Child Advocates of Nevada County
Children Now
Children's Advocacy Institute
Children's Law Center of California
College of Alameda, CAFYES Counseling
College of the Siskiyous Foster Youth Success Program
Common Sense Kids Action
Community College Foundation
Corporation for Supportive Housing
Crittenton
East Bay Children's Law Offices
East Los Angeles College CAFYES/Foster Youth Program
Encompass Community Services
Environmental Alternatives
First Place for Youth
Foster Care Counts
Friends Committee on Legislation of California
Glendale Community College Guardian Scholars Program
Hillsides' Youth Moving On
iFoster
Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program Project ACE
Learning Rights Law Center

Legal Services for Children
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles City College CAFYES program
Los Angeles Harbor College Extended Opportunities Program and Services CAFYES Program
Los Angeles Pierce College
MiraCosta College Resources and Assistance for Former Foster Youth
Moreno Valley College Guardian Scholars Program
Mount San Antonio College, Foster Youth Program
National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter
National Center for Youth Law
New Alternatives, Inc.
Norco College Extended Opportunity Programs & Services
Orange Coast College Guardian Scholars program
Orangewood Foundation
Public Counsel
USC Pullias Center for Higher Education
Redwood Community Action Agency's Youth Service Bureau
Reedley College Promise Scholars program
Renaissance Scholars Program, California State University East Bay
Riverside City College Guardian Scholars Program
San Diego Mesa College Foster Youth Program
Seneca Family of Agencies
SIATech
Sierra College Guardian Scholars Program
Sunny Hills Services
TLC Child and Family Services
Toro Guardian Scholars program, California State University Dominguez Hills
Unity Care Group, Inc.
University of California, San Diego Guardian Scholars Program
University of San Diego Office of Financial Aid
Victor Valley College Financial Aid Office
WestCoast Children's Clinic
West Hills College Coalinga, Student Services
Woodland Community College Foster and Kinship Care Education program
YMCA of San Diego County Youth and Family Services
Young Minds Advocacy
Youth Law Center
Yuba Community College YESS ILP