AB 2458 (Berman)

Greater Accessibility, Information, Notice, and Support (GAINS) for Student Parents Act

SUMMARY

AB 2458 would help student parents afford, enroll in, and successfully complete their higher education journey. Specifically, this bill would ensure that student parents obtain the financial aid they are eligible to receive by taking into account their childcare expenses and require campuses to collect and report data to advance student parent success.

BACKGROUND

California is home to approximately 300,000 undergraduate student parents, 61 percent of which are first-generation college students and 72 percent are students of color.[1] The cost of college, including childcare, is one of their biggest barriers to accessing and completing higher education.[2] In fact, despite having higher grade point averages than non-parenting peers, they are less likely to complete a degree or certificate.[3]

Unlike their non-parenting peers, student parents have additional childcare expenses, which are not accounted for in the college's estimate of a student parent's cost of attendance. Federal regulations allow financial aid administrators to adjust a student's cost of attendance to include the expenses incurred for dependent care, however, institutions often do not take full advantage of this federal flexibility.

Instead, students are forced to individually request an adjustment – a "dependent care allowance" – from financial aid administrators, if they even know this is an option. In some cases, student parents may be asked to provide further proof of their dependent care costs or be incorrectly denied adjustments. This process is not well understood nor consistently applied across institutions, resulting in unnecessary burdens on students and financial aid administrators. In fact, the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that student parents are not maximizing their federal financial aid.[4]

THIS BILL

To ensure student parents can access the financial aid they are eligible to receive and improve student parent success, AB 2458 would:

- Require the development and implementation of a policy to estimate and adjust cost of attendance information for student parents to better account for their childcare expenses (aka dependent care

[1] National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (2023). [Data set].

[2] Goldrick-Rab, S., Welton, C.R., & Coca, V. Hope Center for College, Community and Justice. (2020). Parenting while in college: Basic needs insecurity among students with children.

[3] Institute for Women's Policy Research & Ascend at the Aspen Institute. (April 2019). Parents in college: By the numbers.

[4] GAO (2019). Higher Education: More Information Could Help Student Parents Access Additional Federal Student Aid.

allowance), thereby ensuring that student parents obtain the financial aid they are eligible to receive;

- Require institutions to uniformly collect and report data on student parents;

- Share student parent data with the Office of Cradle-to-Career Data allowing California to evaluate and identify policies that support student parent success; and

- Add additional student parent services and resources to each campus' existing student parent web page, such as information on federal and state tax credits, CalWORKs, and the dependent care allowance.

Comprehensively identifying student parents and increasing their access to financial aid will allow student parents to better afford, enroll in, and successfully complete their higher education journey.

SUPPORT

The California Alliance for Student Parent Success (co-sponsor)
California Competes: Higher Education for a Strong Economy (co-sponsor)
Cal State Student Association (co-sponsor)
The Education Trust – West (co-sponsor)
Generation Hope (co-sponsor)
Michelson Center for Public Policy (co-sponsor)
uAspire (co-sponsor)
UNITE-LA (co-sponsor)
Ascend
Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California
Associated Students, Incorporated of California State University, Bakersfield
BLU Educational Foundation
Calbright College
California African American Chamber of Commerce
California Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce
California Catholic Conference
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
California EDGE Coalition
California Federation of Teachers
The Campaign for College Opportunity
Center for Healthy Communities at CSU Chico
Child Care Resource Center
Children Now
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations
De Anza College Basic Needs Center
Early Edge California
Generation Up
GRACE/End Child Poverty CA
Hispanas Organized for Political Equality
Hollywood Chamber of Commerce
Imaginable Futures
John Burton Advocates for Youth
Justice and Joy National Collaborative
Latino Education Advancement Foundation
LIFT
Long Beach City College
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
Mission Graduates
National Women's Law Center
New America
NextGen California
Northern California College Promise Coalition
Palo Alto University
Parent Institute for Quality Education
Pathways LA
Pregnant Scholar Initiative at the Center for WorkLife Law
Project SPARC
PUENTE Learning Center
Regional Economic Association Leaders (REAL) Coalition
San Diego Community College District
Shine Together
Southern California College Attainment Network
Student Senate for California Community Colleges
Students Rising Above
The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS)
Tipping Point Community
UCSC Student Parent Organization
United Way of Greater Los Angeles

University of California Student Association
Western Center on Law & Poverty
Won't She Do It
Young Invincibles
Young Women's Freedom Center

OPPOSITION

Department of Finance

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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