

CSSA: Legislation for Consideration

Below is proposed legislation for CSSA to take action on in 2016. This document reflects the status of these bills as of 2/23/17.

Federal Legislation – 115th Congressional Session

ACTION ITEMS:

[S. 3542 \(Graham\) – BRIDGE Act](#)

Summary: The BRIDGE (Bar Removal of Individuals who Dream and Grow our Economy) Act would provide temporary relief from deportation and employment authorization to individuals who are eligible for the Department of Homeland Security’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (“DACA”) program.

Analysis: DACA provides temporary protection from removal and work authorization to young students and veterans who grew up in the United States if they register with the government, pay a fee, and pass a criminal background check. More than 752,000 young people have received DACA. Temporary protection under the BRIDGE Act would ensure that these young people can continue to work and study and be protected from deportation while Congress debates broader legislation to fix our broken immigration system.

Recommendation: Support

State Legislation - 2017

ACTION ITEMS:

[SB 16 \(Wieckowski\) Student Loan Repayment Parity](#)

Summary: This bill would prohibit the amount of disposable earnings subject to levy from exceeding 15% of the individual’s disposable earnings.

Analysis: Currently, private student loan creditors can garnish up to 25% of borrower’s disposable income, compared to the 15% federal student loan servicers can garnish. Additionally, federal loan borrowers are afforded more flexibility when it comes to paying back student loans, making it less likely that a student will default on their loan. Private loan borrowers, however, struggle to negotiate flexible repayment options, which can lead to higher default rates. When a private loan borrower defaults on their loan, through a court issued levy, the borrower can have up to 25% of their wages garnished, this bill would set that limit to 15%.

Recommendation: Support

SB 54 (De Leon) California Values Act

Summary: This bill would prohibit state and local law enforcement agencies, school police, and security departments from using state/agency resources to investigate, interrogate, detain, detect, or arrest a person for immigration enforcement purposes.

Analysis: The California Values Act, was drafted in response to Donald Trump's threat to deport millions of people. This bill would prohibit state agencies from using state resources to fuel mass deportation by not allowing state agencies to investigate, interrogate, detain, detect, or arrest a person for immigration enforcement purposes. Additionally, SB 54 would ensure that public schools, state hospitals, and courts are safe and accessible to all people regardless of immigration status by requiring state agencies to develop clear policies about the information they collect from people and the ways in which that information will be safe guarded from immigration enforcement agencies.

Recommendation: Support

SB 68 (Lara) – AB 540 Modernization

Summary: This bill would enable two years at a California Community College to count towards AB 540 eligibility.

Analysis: AB 540 enabled undocumented students who graduated from and spent a minimum of three years in a California High School to qualify for in-state tuition. Prior to AB 540 undocumented students who grew up in California were forced to pay international student fees because they could not establish legal residency. Unfortunately, many undocumented students are unable to receive AB 540 benefits if they do not take the traditional path straight from high school to college. This bill would expand the AB 540 criteria to include non-traditional students so that they may qualify for in-state tuition and financial aid.

Recommendation: Support

State Legislation - 2017

INFORMATION ITEMS:

AB 17 (Holden) Transit Pass Program

Summary: This bill would create the Transit Pass Program to be administered by the Department of Transportation. The bill would require the Controller of the State of California to allocate moneys made available for the program, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to support transit pass programs that provide free or reduced-fare transit passes to specified pupils and students.

Analysis: Student transit programs in the state and across the country have resulted in significant increases in transit ridership and have made it easier and cheaper for students to get

to schools and to jobs. This bill would create the Transit Pass program, to be administered by the Department of Transportation. The State Controller would be responsible for allocating funds to help support programs that provide free-or reduced transit passes. Eligible transit providers and participants would be required to enter into agreements for the distribution of free or reduced-fare transit passes to students. The CSU would be considered an eligible participant and eligible transit providers are defined as a transportation agency, transportation planning agency, or county transportation commission.

AB 214 (Weber) College Student Hunger

Summary: This bill would clarify educational policies for the purpose of improving access for low-income students to the CalFresh program. For the purposes of federal regulation, this bill would specify the definition of half-time college enrollment. Additionally, it would require the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) to provide written notice to Cal Grant recipients who qualify for the CalFresh program under federal regulations.

Analysis: According to the California State University, one in five CSU students experiences chronic hunger, the intent of this bill is to reduce food insecurity amongst college students. Current CalFresh eligibility for students states that any person 18-49; physically and mentally fit for employment; and enrolled at least half-time in an institution of higher education shall be ineligible to participate in the Food Stamps Program. In order to be exempt from this ineligibility a student must meet one of the following exemptions: is employed a minimum of twenty hours per week, is approved for state or federal work study, is responsible for a child under the age of 12, enrolled in CalWorks, EOPS or WIOA.

This bill would make clarifications to the exemptions by requiring CSAC to notify any recipients of a Cal Grant award whose grant includes any amount of funding that has been derived from the Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) block grant or state match to be notified that they are exempt from the CalFresh program student eligibility rules, per federal statute. Additionally, if a student is participating in a program that aims to increase a student's employability, they will be eligible for a CalFresh exemption.

Recommendation: Co-Sponsor

AB 216 (Gonzalez-Fletcher) Prepaid Postage on Vote-By-Mail Ballots

Summary: This bill would require that the return envelope provided to vote-by-mail voters by election officials have pre-paid postage.

Analysis: According to the author, since 2012, between 50 and 60 percent of ballots cast in California statewide elections have been by mail. As of June 2016, 52.3 percent of registered voters in California were registered as permanent vote by mail (PVBM) voters. Furthermore, counties are increasingly turning to mail ballot elections for their potential to increase efficiency, increase turnout, and reduce costs. Limited pilot programs for mail ballot elections have previously been established in Monterey, Sacramento, San Mateo, Yolo and San Diego counties. Most recently, Senate Bill 450 (Allen, 2015) authorized counties in California to

conduct any election as a mail ballot election provided certain conditions, such as the establishment of required vote centers and ballot drop off locations, are met. Some counties will be eligible to begin implementing this starting in 2018. As more and more voters use mail ballots either through individual choice or the decision by counties, it is important to ensure that the process of voting is as equitable as possible.

AB 393 (Quirk-Silva) Mandatory systemwide fees and tuition

Summary: This bill would express legislative findings and declarations relating to the costs of public postsecondary education. The bill would require that the amounts of tuition and mandatory systemwide fees that are charged to students of the California State University, and the amount of the enrollment fee charged to students of the California Community Colleges, not be increased from the amounts that were charged as of December 31, 2016, until the completion of the 2019–20 academic year.

Analysis: This bill makes the following declarations relating to the California State University:

- The California Master Plan for Education, states that public higher education shall be tuition free to all residents.
- State funding per CSU student is near a 30-year low.
- Student debt is increasing.
- In 2015, more than one-half of the CSU’s students received Pell Grant.
- A recent study commissioned by the office of the CSU Chancellor found that one in ten CSU students is homeless and one in five is food insecure.
- CSU students have had to work longer hours to pay tuition and fees.
- Tuition and fees have not kept pace with inflation.
- California is home to an estimated 214,000 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students.
- Of the top 20 most diverse colleges in the western region of the United States, 10 are CSU campuses.
- The CSU provides more than one-half of all undergraduate degrees earned by the state’s Latino, African American, and Native American students.
- More than one-half (56 percent) of CSU students identify as students of color. Roughly 35 percent of CSU undergraduates are the first in their families to attend college.

Additionally this bill would freeze tuition for two years at the rate of the 2016-17 academic year.