

CSSA- LEGISLATION FOR CONSIDERATION

Below is proposed legislation for CSSA to review. This document reflects the status of these bills as of 9/11/19.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION - 2019

Action Items:

S.2225 (Harris) - Basic Assistance for Students in College (BASIC) Act

Problem: *California college students face a number of affordability challenges. These challenges include addressing their most basic needs, including food and housing. Currently in the CSU, 10.9% of our students are homeless. 41.6% of our students struggle with some form of food insecurity. These statistics are all greater for 1st generation students, black students, and former foster youth, as well as many other groups of students. Additionally, these issues impact students across all of higher education, with students in the California Community Colleges struggling at much higher rates, and students at the University of California struggling at somewhat lower rates.*

While the federal government provides significant amounts of aid to low-income students, primarily through the Pell grant program, there is no current federal program designed to solely address a student's basic needs.

Policy Solution: *S.2225 would establish a \$500 million competitive grant program that would be awarded directly to higher education institutions to identify and address their students basic needs. The legislation defines basics needs as food, housing, transportation, child care, and technology.*

These grants would be divided into two main categories. The first would be \$40 million in planning grants of up to \$50,000 per campus to conduct research related to basic needs, and to create plans to address those issues. The second would be \$460 million in implementation grants of up to \$500,000 per institution to help students directly address the basic needs issues through either direct service by the institution, or direct service through community/city/state partnerships.

At least 25% of the total competitive grant program would need to be awarded to community colleges, and priority would be given to institutions with 25% or about Pell enrollment, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), or other federally designated Minority Serving Institution (MSIs).

Recommended bill position: SUPPORT

Information Items:

S. 800 (Cassidy/Warren) - College Transparency Act

Problem: *Our existing postsecondary data systems are incomplete, duplicative, inefficient, and burdensome. In 2008 a ban was enacted on the federal data system to prohibit tracking of employment and graduation outcomes of college students. This meant colleges only had to report data at the institutional level, not providing more-targeted evaluations. Without this information, students and families are not empowered to make well-informed choices about their education, and policymakers and institutions cannot craft evidence-based policies to help students succeed. Furthermore, current postsecondary data is incomplete and does not count all students.*

Policy Solution: *This legislation would overturn the ban and establish a postsecondary student data system to provide better information about college patterns, post-collegiate outcomes, higher-education costs, and federal financial aid. The act also strives to collect accurate reporting on student outcomes such as enrollment, completion, and post-college success across colleges and majors. If enacted, this act would provide information disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender to identify inequities in students' success. This information would be available on a user-friendly website to ensure that the data is transparent, informative, and accessible for students, parents, policymakers, and employers. The data would also be sent back to states and institutions so that they could develop and implement targeted, data-informed strategies aimed at supporting student success.*

In order to protect student privacy, the bill will ban the sale of the data, prohibit access by law enforcement, and limit the use of personally identifiable information.

The bill was introduced by Senator Bill Cassidy and Senator Elizabeth Warren and currently has bipartisan support. To view the bill text, [click here](#).