

Update on state and federal legislation and issues affecting Commission programs

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Priority Legislation

AB 1456 (Medina and McCarty) – Cal Grant Reform Act

- Bill that reflected the Cal Grant Equity Framework by streamlining, simplifying, and expanding the Cal Grant program.
- Position: Support
- Status: **Vetoed**

SB 737 (Limón) - Cal SOAP Modernization

- Updates and modernizes the statutory functions and priorities of the California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP) to focus on financial aid awareness, literacy, and assistance.
- Position: Sponsor (co-sponsor The Education Trust-West)
- Status: **Chaptered**

AB 469 (Reyes) – Financial Aid Completion Requirement

- Requires local educational agencies to ensure that high school seniors submit a financial aid application or opt-out waiver.
- Position: Support
- Status: **Chaptered**

Other Supported Legislation

COVID-19 Relief

- AB 1185 (Cervantes) – **Vetoed**
 - Provide students, during the COVID pandemic, an additional year to meet CalGrant eligibility rules based on time (age & time-out-of-school).

Student Loans & Debt

- AB 340 (Ward) – **Chaptered**
 - Conforms the state's codified 529 college savings plan statutes to recent changes in federal tax law, expanding allowable withdrawals to include (a) expenses associated with participation in a registered apprenticeship program and (b) repayment of student loans.
- AB 424 (Stone) – **Chaptered**
 - Requires private student loan lenders and debt collectors to comply with minimum evidentiary standards when bringing debt collection lawsuits against borrowers.

CalFresh Access

- AB 396 (Gabriel) – **Chaptered**
 - Requires the Department of Social Services to issue guidance on eligibility requirements for programs at community colleges (CCC), the CSU and the UC to become state-approved employment & training programs; also requires campus-based programs at the CCC & CSU, & requests campus-based programs at the UC to apply to become state-approved employment & training programs.
- AB 1326 (Arambula) – **Chaptered**
 - Requires county human service agencies to designate a staff liaison as a direct contact for public higher education institutions within the county.
- SB 20 (Dodd) – **2 Year Bill**
 - Codifies existing CSAC process to notify students they may be eligible for CalFresh; also requires the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to create a form to verify that a student qualifies for an exemption from federal restrictions on student eligibility for CalFresh.

Looking Ahead to 2022

- **Cal Grant Reform**
 - Will be reintroduced by legislators, with a focus on making changes through the State Budget
 - Staff updating cost modeling and projections to reflect new 2021 enacted legislation and budget changes
- **CalFresh for College Students**
 - Upon release of the CalFresh Report from the CSAC CalFresh Workgroup, staff will work with interested legislative partners to proceed with the report's policy recommendations
- **Dream Act Service Incentive Grant (DSIG)**
 - Staff working with legislative and administration partners to make structural fixes to the program
- **Potential 2–Year Bills**
 - AB 288 (Calderon): CA Ban on Scholarship Displacement Act of 2021
 - AB 737 (Santiago): Public postsecondary education: CSU tuition
 - AB 1290 (Lee): Student Aid Commission: student membership
 - SB 20 (Dodd): Student Nutrition: eligibility for CalFresh benefits

Federal Updates

Build Back Better Act – “Human Infrastructure” Package

- Key financial aid provisions:
 - \$500 increase to the maximum Pell Grant award
 - Makes students with DACA and TPS eligible for Pell Grants
- Passed by the House of Representatives on November 19, 2021
- Now in Senate for consideration, likely to face further amendments
- Key fiscal deadlines in December that might yield progress on the Build Back Better Act