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**AB-1567 Public postsecondary education: California State University: California Community Colleges: foster youth: Higher Education Outreach and Assistance Act for Foster Youth. (2017-2018)**

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**Assembly Bill No. 1567**

**CHAPTER 763**

An act to amend Sections 89340, 89341, 89342, 89344, 89345, and 89346 of, and to amend the heading of Article 5 (commencing with Section 89340) of Chapter 3 of Part 55 of Division 8 of Title 3 of, the Education Code, relating to public postsecondary education.

[ Approved by Governor October 13, 2017. Filed with Secretary of State October 13, 2017. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AB 1567, Holden. Public postsecondary education: California State University: California Community Colleges: foster youth: Higher Education Outreach and Assistance Act for Foster Youth.

(1) Existing law establishes the California State University and the California Community Colleges as 2 of the segments of public postsecondary education in this state. Existing law also establishes the Higher Education Outreach and Assistance Act for Emancipated Foster Youth. The act imposes various requirements on the Trustees of the California State University and the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges relating to outreach and retention services for foster youth in order to encourage their enrollment and retention at a campus of either segment. More specifically, the act requires the State Department of Social Services and county welfare departments, in coordination with the California State University and the California Community Colleges, to communicate with foster youth at 2 grade levels designated jointly by the 2 segments in order to facilitate the outreach and technical assistance efforts for those prospective students.

This bill would change the name of the act to the Higher Education Outreach and Assistance Act for Foster Youth.

The bill would also require the State Department of Social Services and county welfare departments, in coordination with the California State University and the California Community Colleges, to coordinate with staff of several designated entities, as appropriate, to verify eligibility of foster youth for participation in programs and other benefits.

The bill would require each campus of the California Community Colleges, upon admission of a foster youth, and each campus of the California State University, upon determination, through receipt of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid or through another means, that a student enrolled at, or applying to, that campus is a current or former foster youth and is eligible for financial aid, to notify that student about appropriate campus support programs, as specified, notify that student of his or her eligibility for financial aid, and provide that student with instructions for accessing the benefits for which he or she has qualified. The bill would specify that notification of students pursuant to this provision may be accomplished by methods including, but not necessarily limited to, inclusion of information in the letters of acceptance sent to foster youth who have been admitted to those campuses.

To the extent that this bill would impose new duties on community college districts and county welfare departments, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

(2) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to the statutory provisions noted above.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: yes

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## THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

**SECTION 1.** The heading of Article 5 (commencing with Section 89340) of Chapter 3 of Part 55 of Division 8 of Title 3 of the Education Code is amended to read:

### **Article 5. Higher Education Outreach and Assistance Act for Foster Youth**

**SEC. 2.** Section 89340 of the Education Code is amended to read:

**89340.** This article shall be known, and may be cited as the Higher Education Outreach and Assistance Act for Foster Youth.

**SEC. 3.** Section 89341 of the Education Code is amended to read:

**89341.** (a) The Legislature makes the following findings and declarations:

(1) Children who live in foster care are abused and neglected individuals for whom the state has assumed parental responsibility. Although foster care is designed to reunite those children, when appropriate, with their parents, or to place those children with an adoptive family, many children are neither reunited with their parents nor adopted. When those children reach the age of 18 years, the state terminates its responsibility. Given that, it is important that these youth have access to postsecondary education, including career technical education during their time in foster care to ensure their long-term economic security.

(2) In California, there are more than 60,000 children and youth in foster care, and approximately 8,000 are college-aged, between 18 and 21 years of age.

(3) While 40 percent of foster youth will enroll in college by 19 years of age, their rate of persistence and degree completion is lower than the general population. Just one in five foster youth will successfully complete 30 or more units. By 26 years of age, 8 percent of foster youth will have earned an associate's degree or higher, compared to 46 percent of the general population. One of the critical hurdles for this student population to overcome is finding the financial resources to fund their education. Only 9 percent of foster youth receive the Cal Grant, California's need-based financial aid award.

(4) Emancipated foster youth, who do not have parents to rely upon for support and guidance, suffer unique disadvantages compared to other students. While many students are preoccupied with academic pressures, the primary concerns cited by former foster youth are the absence of family support and the fear of spending the holidays alone. Emancipated foster youth need emotional support and specialized resources from sensitive university staff who understand the unusual circumstances and pressing needs of emancipated foster youth.

(b) Accordingly, the Legislature states its intent that the Trustees of the California State University and the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges expand the access and retention programs of the university and the community colleges to include the following:

(1) Outreach services to foster youth to encourage their enrollment in a state university or a community college.

(2) Technical assistance to foster youth to assist those prospective students in completing admission applications and financial aid applications.

**SEC. 4.** Section 89342 of the Education Code is amended to read:

**89342.** The Trustees of the California State University and Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges shall perform the following services to assist foster youth:

(a) Review housing issues for those foster youth living in college dormitories to ensure basic housing during the regular academic school year, including vacations and holidays other than summer break.

(b) Provide technical assistance and advice to campuses on ways in which to improve the delivery of services to foster youth.

(c) Commencing in the 1998–99 academic year, track the retention rates of students who voluntarily disclose to the university or community college their status as foster youth.

(d) For purposes of this article, “foster youth” includes former foster youth, and means a person in California whose dependency was established or continued by the court on or after the youth’s 16th birthday and who is no older than 25 years of age at the commencement of the academic year.

**SEC. 5.** Section 89344 of the Education Code is amended to read:

**89344.** Representation on the appropriate California State University Advisory Councils shall be expanded to include at least one foster youth who is either a current or former student at the university.

**SEC. 6.** Section 89345 of the Education Code is amended to read:

**89345.** The State University Educational Opportunity Program and California Community College Extended Opportunity Programs and Services shall ensure that identified foster youth are informed of services, including mentoring, provided by these programs.

**SEC. 7.** Section 89346 of the Education Code is amended to read:

**89346.** (a) The State Department of Social Services and county welfare departments shall, in coordination with the California State University and the California Community Colleges, do both of the following:

(1) Communicate with foster youth at two grade levels designated jointly by the California State University and the California Community Colleges in order to facilitate the outreach and technical assistance efforts for those prospective students.

(2) Coordinate with staff of the California State University Educational Opportunity Program, the California Community Colleges Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, or Cooperating Agencies Foster Youth Educational Support, as appropriate, to verify eligibility of foster youth for participation in programs and other benefits.

(b) (1) Each campus of the California Community Colleges shall do all of the following upon admission of a foster youth, and each campus of the California State University shall do all of the following upon determination, through receipt of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or through another means, that a student enrolled at, or applying to, that campus is a current or former foster youth and is eligible for financial aid:

(A) Notify that student about appropriate campus support programs that may include, but are not necessarily limited to, the California State University Educational Opportunity Program, the California Community Colleges Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, and Cooperating Agencies Foster Youth Educational Support.

(B) Notify that student of his or her eligibility for financial aid.

(C) Provide that student with instructions for accessing the benefits for which he or she has qualified.

(2) Notification of students pursuant to this subdivision may be accomplished by methods that shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, inclusion of information in the letters of acceptance sent to foster youth who have been admitted to those campuses.

**SEC. 8.** If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.