

Assembly Bill No. 2463

CHAPTER 1129

An act to add Article 5 (commencing with Section 89340) to Chapter 3 of Part 55 of the Education Code, relating to postsecondary education.

[Approved by Governor September 30, 1996. Filed
with Secretary of State September 30, 1996.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2463, Caldera. Postsecondary education: outreach and assistance for emancipated foster youth: California State University: California Community Colleges.

(1) Existing law imposes various duties on the Trustees of the California State University concerning students at that institution. Existing law also imposes various duties on the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges concerning community college students.

This bill would state the intent of the Legislature that the trustees and the board of governors expand the access and retention programs of the university and the community colleges to include outreach services to foster youth to encourage their enrollment in a state university or a community college and technical assistance to foster youth to assist those prospective students in completing admission applications and financial aid applications. The bill would require the trustees and the board of governors to review housing issues for those emancipated foster youth living in college dormitories to ensure basic housing during the regular academic school year, provide technical assistance and advice to campuses on ways in which to improve the delivery of services to emancipated foster youth, and track the retention rates of students who voluntarily disclose to the university or community college their status as former emancipated foster youth.

The bill would require the trustees and the board of governors to evaluate the extent to which their current programs are meeting the needs of foster youth and how those outreach and retention services can be improved. The bill would require the trustees and the board of governors to make a progress report to the Legislature by January 1, 1998, on their current and expanded services and efforts to increase the number of emancipated foster youth who attend the university or a community college and remain in school to earn a degree or certificate.

The bill would require representation on appropriate advisory councils to be expanded to include at least one former emancipated

foster youth who is either a current or former student at the university.

The bill would require the State University Educational Opportunity Program and California Community College Extended Opportunity Programs and Services to ensure that identified emancipated foster youth are informed of services, including mentoring, provided by these programs.

The bill would require the Student Aid Commission to provide outreach services and technical assistance to foster youth, as specified.

The bill would require the State Department of Social Services and county welfare departments, in coordination with the university and the California Community Colleges, to communicate with foster youth at 2 grade levels selected jointly by the university and the California Community Colleges in order to facilitate the outreach and technical assistance efforts for those prospective students. The imposition of this requirement on county welfare departments would impose a state-mandated local program.

The bill would express the intent of the Legislature that the University of California and private and independent colleges and universities undertake efforts similar to those described above to assist emancipated foster youth.

(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, including the creation of a State Mandates Claims Fund to pay the costs of mandates that do not exceed \$1,000,000 statewide and other procedures for claims whose statewide costs exceed \$1,000,000.

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 these statutory provisions.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Article 5 (commencing with Section 89340) is added to Chapter 3 of Part 55 of the Education Code, to read:

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

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

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 to those youth. Many of those youth are not prepared to sustain themselves independently. As a result, a disproportionate number of former foster youth are homeless, dependent on public assistance, unemployed, and more likely to commit suicide. Foster youth are also much less likely to attend college than other youth.

(2) In California, there are more than 90,000 children in foster care. Every year 4,000 youth leave foster care upon reaching the age of 18 years. While more than one-half of high school graduates go on to enroll in college, less than 25 percent of foster youth in California enroll in college. Of the foster youth who do enroll in college, only 7 percent enroll in a four-year university.

(3) While the foster youth college enrollment rate is extremely low, the college dropout rate of foster youth is extremely high. Studies also indicate that while few former foster youth enroll in college, even fewer go on to earn a degree. Sixty-seven percent of all emancipated foster youth who enroll in college will drop out before graduation. One of the critical hurdles for this student population to overcome is finding the financial resources to fund their education. Only 10 percent of foster youth who apply for a Cal Grant, California's need-based financial aid award, actually ever receive that grant.

(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.



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

(a) Review housing issues for those emancipated 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 emancipated 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 former emancipated foster youth.

89343. The Trustees of the California State University and Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges shall evaluate the extent to which their current programs are meeting the needs of foster youth and how those outreach and retention services can be improved. The trustees and the board of governors shall make a progress report to the Legislature by January 1, 1998, on their current and expanded services and efforts to increase the number of emancipated foster youth who attend the university or a community college and remain in school to earn a degree or certificate.

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

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

89346. The State Department of Social Services and county welfare departments shall, in coordination with the California State University and the California Community Colleges, 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.

89347. The Student Aid Commission shall provide outreach services and technical assistance to foster youth at the two grade levels designated jointly by the California State University and the California Community Colleges. The State Department of Social Services and county welfare departments shall, in coordination with the Student Aid Commission, communicate with foster youth at the two grade levels designated jointly by the California State University and the California Community Colleges in order to facilitate the



Student Aid Commission's outreach and technical assistance efforts for those prospective students.

SEC. 2. It is the intent of the Legislature that the University of California and private and independent colleges and universities undertake efforts similar to those described in Article 5 (commencing with Section 89340) of Chapter 3 of Part 55 of the Education Code to assist emancipated foster youth. It is also the intent of the Legislature that the State Department of Social Services and the county welfare departments coordinate with the University of California, the California State University, the California Community Colleges, private and independent colleges and universities, and the Student Aid Commission to facilitate outreach and technical assistance efforts on behalf of foster youth at all grade levels.

SEC. 3. Notwithstanding Section 17610 of the Government Code, 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. If the statewide cost of the claim for reimbursement does not exceed one million dollars (\$1,000,000), reimbursement shall be made from the State Mandates Claims Fund.

Notwithstanding Section 17580 of the Government Code, unless otherwise specified, the provisions of this act shall become operative on the same date that the act takes effect pursuant to the California Constitution.

