

AB 669 (Fong) – Foster Youth Residency Requirements Fact Sheet

SUMMARY

Assembly Bill 669 reduces barriers to help foster youth go to college creating an exception to the uniform residency requirement for emancipated foster youth who are age 19 and under, which will allow these students to pay California resident in-state tuition and fees.

BACKGROUND

Under current law, a student's residency status is needed to determine the fees or tuition the student must pay to attend a California Community College, California State University, or University of California campus.

This bill makes it easier for former foster youth to establish residency for purposes of attending college, paying in-state tuition, and applying for financial aid. This bill would allow these students to maintain the California residency status they had as a minor until the time they can establish residency on their own.

Currently, a foster youth becomes emancipated after his or her 18th birthday. Legally, at this point, the foster youth is on his or her own. For purposes of applying to college and determining whether the student is eligible for in-state tuition, it takes one year and one day (19 years of age) before a student can establish his or her own residency. Until that time the student's residency is based on that of his or her parents. For foster youth this gap represents a problem, because as wards of the State of California, they may or may not be in contact with their biological parents or their biological parents may no longer reside in California.

Foster youth face many barriers that make it extremely challenging for them to succeed in life. After foster youth turn 18 years old, they are emancipated and are expected to be independent. Statistics show:

- 40% of emancipated youth will face homelessness within the first 18 months of being emancipated

- 51% face unemployment within 2-4 years of emancipation
- Each year, approximately 4,000 youth emancipate from California's foster care system
- Only 20% of foster youth who graduate from high school attempt to go to college, compared to 60% of their peers
- Only 1%-5% of foster youth ever graduate from college
- In 2007-08, the California community colleges served approximately 6,000 self-identified former foster youth

Currently, emancipated foster youth who have not been able to establish residency because of legal barriers delay enrollment for years or do not enroll in college at all. AB 669 provides a safety net to help with their transition to college.

AB 669 Eliminates an Unintentional Barrier that makes it Difficult for Foster Youth to Go to College. Given the challenges foster youth face, eliminating any barrier that makes it more difficult for an emancipated foster youth to go to college makes sense. The State has a responsibility to help make their transition as emancipated foster youth as easy as possible.

AB 669 is an easy fix that has no fiscal impact to the State. It's the right thing to do.

STATUS

Introduced February 25, 2009

SPONSOR

California Community Colleges, Office of the Chancellor

CONTACT

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