



SENATOR DAVE CORTESE

SB 33: California SOAR (Success, Opportunity, & Academic Resilience) Guaranteed Income Program

SUMMARY

SB 33 establishes a statewide guaranteed income pilot program titled the **California SOAR (Success, Opportunity, & Academic Resilience) Guaranteed Income Program**. The program will provide students experiencing homelessness with direct cash assistance to support their transition out of high school and their access to employment and postsecondary education.

BACKGROUND

A staggering number of youth live in California without stable and safe housing. According to CDE Data, this past school year, approximately 246,000 students were experiencing homelessness in California, trending near pre-pandemic levels. With federal funding from the pandemic expiring, the situation is urgent, and students need support that provides stability. According to Census Data ([DataQuest](#)), approximately **17,000 students** experiencing homelessness were enrolled in the 12th grade during the 2023-2024 academic year, a **2,000-student increase from the previous year**.

Housing insecurity and significant costs associated with enrolling in postsecondary education pose a substantial barrier to low-income individuals. Youth experiencing homelessness who do enroll in college are sometimes subject to the “summer melt” phenomenon, which is when students who have every intention of attending college in the following fall never actually enroll, in part due to a lack of financial resources. Students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, and first-generation students are disproportionately impacted by “summer melt.”

Guaranteed income is a proven, cost-effective policy solution to poverty and inequality among marginalized communities. Research shows that

direct cash transfers, such as guaranteed income, are highly effective and can play a crucial role in helping youth exit homelessness sustainably.

The Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration ([SEED](#)) in Stockton gave 125 individuals an income at or below the city’s median income with a guaranteed income of \$500 per month for two years. The unconditional cash enabled recipients to find full-time employment, improve their mental and physical health, and alleviate financial scarcity, creating new opportunities for recipients. In Santa Clara County, the ongoing Transition-Aged Youth Basic Income Pilot Program has supported participating former foster youth in securing stable housing, improving their financial health, and continuing or returning to their educational careers.

THIS BILL

This bill establishes a statewide guaranteed income program, CalSOAR. The program will provide \$1,000 in direct cash assistance to youth from May 1, 2026, through August 1, 2026. CalSOAR will be administered by the Department of Social Services utilizing CalPADs data. Additionally, the bill seeks to create protections from any impact on public assistance programs, student financial aid, and the California Earned Income Tax Credit. Lastly, this bill directs the department to measure student employment and education attainment outcomes.

SUPPORT

Economic Security Project Action (**Co-sponsor**)
End Poverty in California (EPIC) (**Co-sponsor**)
Mayors for a Guaranteed Income (**Co-sponsor**)
County of Santa Clara (**Co-Sponsor**)
United Way, Capitol Region (**Co-Sponsor**)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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