



FACT SHEET

AB 2637 (O'Donnell)
Educational Support Payments

SUMMARY

AB 2637, beginning May 1, 2019, establishes the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids statewide Educational Support Payment (ESP) Program, which grants a one-time educational achievement credit of \$500 upon high school graduation for non-pregnant, non-parenting teens.

BACKGROUND

The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program provides monthly income assistance and employment-related services to low income families with children. The program is one of California's essential anti-poverty strategies and works to move children out of poverty and help families meet their most basic needs. CalWORKs also offers support to recipients who need assistance as they make their transition into the workforce.

Cal-Learn is a statewide program for pregnant and parenting teens in the CalWORKs program. It is designed to encourage pregnant and parenting teens to graduate from high school, become independent, and form healthy families. The program features intensive case management; funding for childcare, transportation and other expenses needed to attend school; and one-time achievement grants to incentivize high school graduation. Financial incentives have been a particularly useful tool to encourage these students to complete their education.

NEED FOR THE BILL

Given their socioeconomic status, non-pregnant and non-parenting CalWORKs students face similar challenges to Cal-Learn teens. However, no equivalent program has ever been offered to teens in CalWORKs households who are not pregnant or parenting. This leaves a significant portion of our most vulnerable youth without the same opportunity to receive assistance as they transition to their next step in life.

SOLUTION

A high school diploma is a fundamental necessity for CalWORKs teens working to get on the track to self-sufficiency. AB 2637 seeks to facilitate CalWORKs recipients attainment of education by extending the existing one-time achievement grants to non-pregnant, non-parenting teens upon completion of high school. This may also encourage more students to pursue higher education, thus opening up even more career pathways.

SUPPORT

- County of Los Angeles (Co-sponsor)
- County Welfare Directors Association (Co-sponsor)

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