



Summary:

This bill would clarify technical ambiguities in SB 1232 (Glazer, Chapter 366, Statutes of 2020).

Issue:

According to the Public Policy Institute of California, by 2030, California will face a shortfall of 1 million college graduates. At the same time, college students in California are experiencing unprecedented levels of housing and food insecurity, making a college education less accessible, especially for low-income students.

Existing law establishes the CalWORKs program to provide cash assistance and other services for low-income families through the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Under CalWORKs, each county aids through a combination of state, county, and federal TANF funds.

In order to qualify for CalWORKs benefits, recipients must be low-income, unemployed, and have dependents.

According to the Department of Social Services, CalWORKs recipients are generally allowed to receive CalWORKs benefits for up to four years, although the majority of recipients stay on CalWORKs for between 2 and 3 years.

Previously, college student parents on CalWORKs could be required to work or do an employment or training activity (WTW) for 20-30 hours to receive full CalWORKs benefits. Not only did this make it difficult to be a parent, full time student, and do 20-30 hours of non-college WTW activities and parenting all at the same time, but if a student-parent on CalWORKs did not meet their work hour requirement, they could have had their benefits reduced. This effectively punished low-income parents for seeking a college education.

Existing Law:

Last year the Legislature passed SB 1232 (Glazer, 2020) that prevented CalWORKs recipients from being penalized if they enrolled in college. SB 1232

allowed CalWORKs recipients enrolled in college full-time or part-time to receive full CalWORKs benefits if they are making satisfactory progress as defined by their educational entity. Further, SB 1232 allowed these students to receive funds to purchase books prior to the beginning of their academic term.

Proposal:

This bill, SB 768, is intended to clarify some of the language of SB 1232. SB 768 clarifies that:

1. Students enrolled in private, non-for-profit institutions meet the SB 1232 standards.
2. Summer session classes meet the SB 1232 standards as a “quarter”.

Support:

Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations
University of California Student Association

Contact:

Alexxis Frost, Legislative Aide, at
Alexxis.Frost@sen.ca.gov or 916.934.8148