
THIRD READING

Bill No: ACR 20
Author: Medina (D) and McCarty (D), et al.
Introduced: 2/4/21
Vote: 21

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: Read and adopted, 2/18/21

SUBJECT: Financial Aid Awareness Month

SOURCE: California Student Aid Commission

DIGEST: This resolution proclaims the month of February 2021 as Financial Aid Awareness Month.

ANALYSIS: This resolution makes the following legislative findings:

- 1) For many California students and families, access to student financial aid is the single determining factor between choosing to pursue higher education or not, especially for low-income and first-generation students.
- 2) Financial aid includes federal Pell Grants, the Federal Work-Study Program, federal student loans, the Cal Grant Program, the Middle Class Scholarship, the California DREAM Loan Program, institutional-based aid, and public and private scholarships.
- 3) The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the California Dream Act Application (CADAA) are the two primary applications students use to apply for federal, state, and institutional-based financial aid, depending on their United States citizenship status.
- 4) Awareness of the existence of financial aid and a clear understanding of the financial aid process itself are essential to making access to postsecondary education a reality for students across the state, especially for those that have historically been excluded from such attainment.

- 5) The global COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates the challenges and financial barriers many students experience in pursuit of higher education, elevating the importance of financial aid awareness now more than ever.

This resolution, in recognition of the growing financial needs of students and families, proclaims the month of February 2021 shall be proclaimed Financial Aid Awareness Month, and urges the Legislature use its institutional role and resources to raise awareness of the importance of financial aid and mobilize efforts to increase completion rates of financial aid applications to maximize the state's investment in its students, especially low-income and first-generation students.

Comments

According to the author,

This resolution is an important first step in recognizing that we need to do more for our students, especially when many face great financial uncertainty about their future and educational opportunities due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. ACR 20 encourages the Legislature to spread the word among their constituencies about the importance of financial aid – and remind students to file their FAFSA or CADAA by the March 2nd priority deadline. It thus affirms California's support for expanding equity across its higher education system and investing in first-generation and low-income students.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: No Local: No

SUPPORT: (Verified 3/1/21)

California Student Aid Commission (source)

OPPOSITION: (Verified 3/1/21)

None received

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