

---

## SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anthony Portantino, Chair  
2021 - 2022 Regular Session

---

### **SB 622 (Roth) - Student financial aid: State Department of Social Services: individuals serving foster youth**

**Version:** March 10, 2021

**Urgency:** No

**Hearing Date:** January 18, 2022

**Policy Vote:** HUMAN S. 5 - 0, ED. 7 - 0

**Mandate:** No

**Consultant:** Lenin Del Castillo

**Bill Summary:** This bill requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) to establish a program to provide tuition assistance to postgraduate students who are currently employed by, or who commit to seeking employment in, a county probation department serving foster youth and providing court-ordered placement services.

**Fiscal Impact:** This bill, upon appropriation of federal Title IV-E funds, expands the Title IV-E Stipend Program to a person currently employed by, or who plans to be employed by, a county probation department serving foster youth when the person attends any graduate school a qualifying postgraduate institution. While the purpose of the bill appears to be consistent with the existing program, by explicitly authorizing tuition assistance for county probation department employees, it could potentially lead to additional, unknown cost pressure on the federal Title IV-E funds. Further, the bill defines "tuition assistance" as a stipend or reimbursement for tuition, fees, books, and travel, as developed by DSS. However, it does not provide any parameters on the amount of tuition assistance that can be provided nor does it specify the number of awardees.

**Background:** Under the federal Child Welfare and Adoption Assistance Act of 1980, Title IV-E of the Social Security Act (Title IV-E) provides federal matching funds for state administering foster care and adoption assistance programs. In addition to federal matching funds for state foster care programs, the Title IV-E Stipend Program was created to support training and education opportunities for current and prospective child welfare professionals. The program supports social work education to build and strengthen the child welfare workforce by disbursing funds through university partnerships that provide stipends to students pursuing a Bachelor's of Social Work and Master's of Social Work and who are employed or preparing for employment in a public child welfare agency. This allows students at participating universities across the country to receive stipends to help offset the cost of higher education in exchange for commitment of a career with a public child welfare agency. In California, the Title-IV Stipend Program is operated through the California Social Work Education Center.

**Proposed Law:** This bill requires DSS to establish a program to provide tuition assistance to individuals pursuing postgraduate degrees who are currently employed by, or who commit to seeking employment in, a qualifying agency serving foster youth. The tuition assistance program shall do all of the following:

- a) Facilitate postgraduate degrees for eligible individuals who directly work with foster youth and provide court-ordered placement services.
- b) Prioritize the enrollment of eligible individuals who reflect the diversity of the state's foster youth population.
- c) Prioritize the enrollment of current state, county, or tribal probation placement staff.

This bill requires DSS, upon appropriation of federal Title IV-E funds, to provide tuition assistance to eligible individuals while they attend any graduate school at the University of California, the California State University, or an independent institution of higher education.

**-- END --**