

## Legislative Proposal to Reduce Homelessness Among College Students

### BACKGROUND

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California's community colleges, California State Universities (CSU) and University of California (UC) campuses are recognizing that growing food and housing insecurity among college students pose serious barriers to educational achievement. In recognition of this challenge, all three systems have convened statewide efforts to develop strategies to address these serious needs. In the FY 19 state budget, the food insecurity needs of students were acknowledged by the State Legislature and the Administration through a one-time \$10 million investment at community colleges and \$3 million investment in CSUs and UCs. This investment was coupled with requirements of campuses receiving funding to address the food security of students, including providing a campus employee to assist students with CalFresh applications and an on-campus food pantry or food distribution system.

### PROBLEM

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California is having a crisis in homelessness among its college students. According to a 2018 report by the Los Angeles Community College District, a full 1 in 5 students experienced an episode of homelessness within the last 12 months. A study of California State University (CSU) students found that 11% of students reported being homeless one or more times in the last year. Not surprisingly, homelessness seriously impacts a student's ability to remain in school and be successful. The issue of student homelessness is particularly acute among students attending California's community colleges, where dorm access is limited. Of the 115 community colleges in California, just 11 have dorms.

### THIS PROPOSAL

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John Burton Advocates for Youth proposes to address the mounting crisis of homelessness among college students by establishing housing resources within the Community College and CSU Chancellor's Offices and UC Office of the President and by requiring campuses that receive funding to implement measures to maximize the financial aid received by homeless students and ensure linkage to community-based housing resources. John Burton Advocates for Youth is proposing a \$20 million annual investment in housing for homeless and housing insecure community college, CSU and UC students, to be shared by the three systems in proportion to their total enrollment. Colleges and universities receiving funding would be required to:

- **Partner with a local homeless service agency to implement a college-focused rapid rehousing program.** These programs would provide housing identification, rental assistance and intensive case management to quickly move students from homelessness into housing coupled with meaningful, sustained connections to post-secondary education.
- **Facilitate access by students to available local housing resources:** Colleges would be required to establish a relationship with their local homeless Continuum of Care, develop a referral mechanism into their county's coordinated entry system for homeless services and train staff regarding how to access housing assistance in their community.
- **Ensure that homeless students are receiving all available financial aid:** Colleges would be required to review the financial aid packages of all students participating in the housing program, ensure that homeless students are receiving aid in timely manner and adopt policies that enable homeless youth to maintain access to financial aid.

Each campus that receives funding would be required to submit an annual report, which would be compiled and submitted to the legislature, detailing how many students received support, the duration of support and the retention and graduation rates of program participants.