



AB 1829 (Fong)

CalWORKs Recipients Education Program(Rep)

Summary

AB 1829 increases access to critical educational supports for low-income parenting students in need, strengthening the financial supports provided to program participants, and expanding participants' opportunities for experiential and work-based learning to enhance social and economic mobility.

Background

CalWORKs REP helps community college students receiving CalWORKs cash aid prepare for employment by providing vital services such as work study, job placement, childcare, skills training, and case management support. These services help students reach self-sufficiency and economic mobility. However, certain program requirements are keeping too many students out of the program.

Problem

First, only the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) portion of funding for CalWORKs REP can be used to provide direct aid to CalWORKs REP students. The current legislative language does not provide the same kind of flexibility for the Proposition 98 portion of the program funding. This severely limits colleges' ability to provide adequate resources to CalWORKs REP students. Funds can help students pay for technology and equipment that are essential for their academic studies, including laptops, internet access, and software applications. CalWORKs REP students are typically single parents with childcare needs who may be unable to visit the college computer lab during evenings and weekends.

A final challenge is the requirement that employers provide a 25% match for work study wages, which serves as a disincentive for employers to participate in the program. This change would also bring state requirements in alignment with current Federal Work Study standards on employer engagement and provide a greater incentive for off-campus employers to participate. This will increase the number of students who are placed in work study opportunities that align with their educational and career goals.

Solution

AB 1929 would:

- **Allow** the use of Proposition 98 portion of the CalWORKs REP funding to be used for direct aid to students for basic needs.
- **Allow** community colleges to waive the employer match requirement for work study funds.

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