

Date of Hearing: March 29, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Al Muratsuchi, Chair
AB 278 (Reyes) – As Amended March 16, 2023

SUBJECT: High Schools: Dream Resource Center Grant Program

SUMMARY: Establishes the Dream Resource Center Grant Program to support Dream Resource Centers to provide resources for high school students, including undocumented students, subject to an appropriation for this purpose. Specifically, **this bill**:

- 1) Establishes the Dream Resource Center Grant Program with the goal of creating Dream Resource Centers (Centers) at schools serving high school students, including undocumented students, in grades 9 to 12.
- 2) Specifies that the purpose of a Center is to provide students, including undocumented students, with resources that include, but are not limited to, all of the following:
 - a) Financial aid support;
 - b) Social services support;
 - c) State-funded immigration legal services;
 - d) Academic opportunities; and
 - e) Parent and family workshops.
- 3) Authorizes school districts to apply to the California Department of Education (CDE) for funding under this program for one or more schoolsites, including those districts that may have one or more existing Centers.
- 4) Requires the applications to demonstrate the need for a Center at one or more schoolsites within the school district, or the need for supplemental funding at one or more existing Centers.
- 5) Requires the CDE to administer the grant program, as a 4-year grant program, and requires the CDE to perform all of the following:
 - a) Review applications and award grants based upon a tiered point system with consideration to:
 - i) School districts with a large number of schoolsites with a demonstrated need, as defined by the CDE;
 - ii) Providing additional points to school districts in underserved areas, including rural areas, to ensure that there are fair opportunities for them to access funding; and
 - iii) Awarding no more than 5% of the total funding to existing Centers.

- b) Identify the data to be collected by grant recipients and identify how the CDE will collect that data.
- 6) Requires a grant recipient to use the grant for the following:
- a) Creating a Center that provides students with the resources identified in (2) above; or
 - b) Choose to have the Center supported through memorandums of understanding (MOUs) between the school and community-based organizations or institutions of higher education; or
 - c) To supplement, but not supplant, funding for an existing Center that provides students with the resources identified in (2) above.
- 7) Requires the CDE to submit a report to the Legislature detailing the successes, best practices, barriers or constraints, outcomes of the Centers funded with grants under this program, and data collected, as specified, by June 1, 2026.
- 8) Requires this program to be implemented only upon an appropriation for this purpose.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Encourages the California Community Colleges (CCC), the California State University (CSU), and the University of California (UC) to establish Dream Resource Centers on each of their respective campuses. (Education Code (EC) 66021.8)
- 2) Requires that the CCC and the CSU, and requests that the UC, designate a Dreamer Resource Liaison on each of their respective campuses beginning with the 2020-21 academic year. (EC 66021.8)
- 3) Exempts specified California nonresidents from paying nonresident tuition at UC, CSU, and CCC, also known as the AB 540 nonresident tuition waiver, if they meet all of the following:
 - a) Attended or attained credits at a California high school, an adult school, a CCC campus, or a combination of these entities, for the equivalent of three or more years; or completed three or more years of full-time high school coursework, and a total of three or more years of attendance in California elementary schools, California secondary schools, or a combination of such elementary and secondary schools;
 - b) Graduated from a California high school or attained an equivalent degree; attained a CCC associate degree; or fulfilled the minimum transfer requirements from a CCC campus to a UC or CSU campus;
 - c) Registered or attended an accredited California higher education institution beginning after fall of the 2001-02 academic year; and,
 - d) If a person without lawful immigration status has filed an affidavit stating that the student has filed an application to legalize his or her immigration status or will file such an application as soon as he or she is eligible to so do. (EC 68130.5.)

- 4) Establishes the California DREAM Act to provide state financial aid, including the Cal Grant Program and the CCC California College Promise Grant, and institutional financial aid to students who qualify for the aforementioned exemption from non-resident tuition. (EC 69508.5)
- 5) Establishes the California DREAM Loan Program intended to provide low-interest loans to DREAM Act students who are accessing the Cal Grant Program and attending UC and CSU. These students are not eligible for federal student loans. Requires the state, the UC, and the CSU to share in the costs of launching the program. (EC 70030-70039)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. According to the author, “AB 278 will establish the Dream Resource Center grant program to create and support Dream Centers across California. Dream Centers provide essential resources such as financial aid assistance and access to legal services to help students, especially those coming from undocumented and immigrant backgrounds, reach their educational and professional goals. Dream Centers have had notable success in our colleges and universities following previous legislation requiring liaisons to be present on campuses. Dream Centers have also been established in a few high schools in Los Angeles Unified School District. In our high schools, Dream Centers have served as a lifeline for students and their families. California is home to many first generation and immigrant students, many of whom have to navigate a complex immigration and education system without proper guidance or support. Students have to stay up to date on both federal and state policies in order to maneuver through our immigration process. For example, recent changes to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program have led to a new generation of students without DACA protections or work authorizations. This is too much for students to handle on their own. California must act to provide students with the opportunity to succeed and build upon the success of existing Dream Centers. By giving students the tools and resources needed to succeed statewide, many students will reach new higher educational and professional opportunities. AB 278 will provide access to resources, stability and hope to our students.”

The Dream Act and DACA. According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), The DREAM Act (short for Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act) was a bill in Congress that would have granted legal status to certain undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children and went to school here. Although several versions of the bill have been introduced in Congress since 2001, it has never passed. In recent years the term “Dreamer” has been used to describe young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children, who have lived and gone to school here, and who in many cases identify as American.

In 2012, President Obama issued the Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals (DACA) executive order after the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act did not pass in Congress several times. According to the ADL, since DACA began, approximately 800,000 people have been approved for the program. To be eligible, applicants had to have arrived in the U.S. before age 16 and lived here since June 15, 2007. They could not have been older than 30 when the Department of Homeland Security enacted the policy in 2012. DACA applicants have to provide evidence they were living in the U.S. at the prescribed times, proof of education and

confirmation of their identities. They also had to pass background, fingerprint and other biometric checks that record identifying biological features.

According to the National Immigration Forum (NIF), there are as many as 3.6 million Dreamers residing in the U.S., many of whom either did not apply for DACA or aged into the program after it stopped accepting new applicants. Approximately 653,000 Dreamers are currently protected under DACA, less than the 800,000 protected at the height of participation. The average DACA recipient arrived in the U.S. at age 7 and has lived here for more than 20 years. Because DACA required children to have arrived in the U.S. 5 years before its 2012 implementation, younger Dreamers are not eligible for DACA.

Data from the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) identifies 168,120 DACA recipients in California as of September 2022. They estimate that 343,000 individuals would have been immediately eligible for DACA under the program's original 2012 rules as of December 2021. MPI reports that they estimate that the unauthorized immigrant population in California from 2014-18 was 2.6 million.

State resources for AB 540 students. State law, established by AB 540 and expanded upon by other legislation, allows non-resident students who meet certain qualifications to pay in-state tuition. These students may include undocumented students, students who are US citizens but who are not California residents, and dependent students whose parents are not California residents. The California Dream Act, established by SB 131 (Cedillo, chapter 604, statutes of 2010) allows AB 540 students to apply for and receive private scholarships funded through public universities, state-administered financial aid, University grants, community college fee waivers, and Cal Grants. Current law additionally establishes a loan program, known as the Dream loan, for those students attending a participating UC or CSU. Students apply for these awards using the California Dream application.

Many higher education institutions have designated centers that support undocumented students. Support for AB 540 students on each campus varies and services can range from having a designated center that is independent or share a space and/or having a point of contact. As part of the President's Initiative on Undocumented Students, each UC campus has a designated physical space where knowledgeable staff is housed and available to support undocumented students. As of 2019, among the 23 CSU campuses, 19 have a designated space on campus (Dream Resource Center) others provide information through existing student support programs. Many community colleges have either a space or staff dedicated to offering support for undocumented students as they matriculate. Of the 115 community colleges, 35 community colleges have Dream Resource Centers; of the 35 centers, 19 have Dream Resource Center Coordinators. The program components, staffing patterns, and level of services provided to undocumented students varies among the community college Dream Resource Centers. Additionally, many other community college campuses have identified a person on campus to assist undocumented students as they matriculate.

Arguments in support. The Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA), sponsor of the measure states, "Dream Resource Centers on college campuses have a long track record of service to undocumented students. In 2012, in response to data that illustrated the need for more support for its undocumented students, the University of California, Berkeley became the first in the nation to create an undocumented student center on its campus. Other UCs, CSUs and California Community Colleges soon established their own Dream Resource Centers on their

respective campuses and as of 2019, 63 Dream Resource Centers operate in various California institutions of higher learning campuses. The positive impacts of DRCs on campus were further solidified when State Legislature enacted AB 1645 (Rubio) in 2019, encouraging the creation of DRCs on college campuses. AB 278 builds upon the success and effectiveness of Dream Resource Centers by allowing undocumented and immigrant students to have access to the beneficial services Dream Resource Centers provide sooner in their academic journey.

Students should not have to wait until stepping foot on a college campus to get information from trusted sources about their education, financial aid and career options. AB 278 would provide access to needed resources for districts and schools throughout the state to create these spaces on their campuses. Investing in high school Dream Resource Centers would mean undocumented students would have access to support services earlier in their academic journey, ensuring they have all the information they need to successfully navigate a path after high school.”

Related legislation. AB 1645 (Blanca Rubio and Reyes) Chapter 788, Statutes of 2019 requires the CCC and CSU, and requests the UC, to designate a Dreamer Resource Liaison who is knowledgeable in financial aid and other support services to assist students who qualify for the exemption from paying nonresident tuition established by AB 540 (Firebaugh, Chapter 814, Statutes of 2001). It also encourages the establishment of Dream Resource Centers on each campus, as specified.

AB 540 (Limón) Chapter 513, Statutes of 2019, establishes the California Dreamer Service Incentive Grant Program, under the administration of the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC), for students that qualify for the exemption from nonresident tuition established by AB 540 (Firebaugh), Chapter 814, Statutes of 2001.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Alliance for A Better Community
California Immigrant Policy Center
California Student Aid Commission
Central American Resource Center- Carecen- of California
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
First Gen Empower
Immigrants Rising

Opposition

None on file

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