

Fast Blast

California Student Aid Commission

From Diana Fuentes-Michel

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In support of the Commission's ongoing goal of providing California's financial aid community with proactive and current updates, we are providing this update on programs and projects. Please share this with any interested person who may not have received this newsletter.

Legislative Update

Sunday, Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 1540- the Cash for College program into law. This bill established the Cash for College Program to be administered by the Commission in partnership with private businesses and industry, and local community and educational organizations.

AB 1540 also authorizes the Commission to allocate funds to accomplish the goals of the program, such as statewide annual workshops and outreach efforts that provide multi-lingual hands-on financial aid application assistance to students and their families to apply for Cal Grants and other postsecondary financial aid.

This bill also authorizes the Commission to accept in-kind support from local private and community organizations.

The Commission is pleased with the signing of AB 1540, as it provides the Commission with the authority to expand the student benefits offered in the Cash for College Program.

On Saturday, October 13, Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed SB 1- the California Dream Act, which would have provided access to postsecondary financial aid to California undocumented students.

This bill would have allowed all California high school graduates who met the non-resident in-state tuition requirements a fee waiver at community colleges and the ability to participate in the Cal Grant program administered by the Commission.

In his veto message, the Governor wrote, "At a time when segments of California public higher education, the University of California and the California State University, are raising fees on all students attending college in order to maintain the quality of education provided, it would not be prudent to place additional strain on the General Fund to accord the new benefit of providing state subsidized financial aid to students without lawful immigration status. Under existing law, undocumented students, who meet the required criteria,

already qualify for the lower in-state tuition rate while attending California public colleges and universities. Therefore, I cannot sign this bill."

The Commission had previously supported SB 160, an earlier version of the California Dream Act.

Chafee Students Receive a Helping Hand

The John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes has graciously donated gift cards to first-year Chafee recipients.

The Chafee Program provides \$5,000 to current or former foster youth for vocational school training or college courses.

On Friday, the Commission mailed letters and authorization forms to all first-year Chafee students. Each student may opt-in and receive the gift card by filling out the authorization form.

Thanks to our partners-Wells Fargo Bank who volunteered to produce the gift cards and the Los Angeles Cash for College Program who volunteered to distribute the gift cards- our students will receive additional funding to help support their education. I also want to convey a special heartfelt thank you to the Burton Foundation for supplying these valuable gift certificates for our most sensitive student population.

Talk with us- The Commission appreciates any comments or feedback you may have regarding the *Fast Blast*. Please forward your comments to fastblast@csac.ca.gov.

