

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2308 Session of 2020

INTRODUCED BY ROZZI, BULLOCK, DONATUCCI, McNEILL, MURT, HOWARD, ULLMAN, KENYATTA, HARKINS, SCHLOSSBERG, HANBIDGE, KINSEY, HILL-EVANS, HOHENSTEIN, GALLOWAY, WARREN, GAINNEY, BURGOS, SANCHEZ, T. DAVIS, READSHAW, FREEMAN, LEE, SHUSTERMAN, SCHWEYER, MARKOSEK, KIM AND GILLEN, FEBRUARY 24, 2020

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 24, 2020

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled "An
 2 act relating to the public school system, including certain
 3 provisions applicable as well to private and parochial
 4 schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the
 5 laws relating thereto," in preliminary provisions, providing
 6 for homeless and foster youth at institutions of higher
 7 education.

8 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
 9 hereby enacts as follows:

10 Section 1. The act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known
 11 as the Public School Code of 1949, is amended by adding a
 12 section to read:

13 Section 129. Homeless and Foster Youth at Institutions of
 14 Higher Education.--(a) Each institution of higher education
 15 that maintains student housing facilities shall give priority
 16 for housing to current and former homeless youth and current and
 17 former foster youth. The following shall apply:

18 (1) Each institution of higher education that maintains
 19 student housing facilities open for occupation during school

1 breaks or on a year-round basis shall give first priority to
2 current and former homeless youth and current and former foster
3 youth for residence in the housing facilities that are open for
4 uninterrupted year-round occupation and provide housing to
5 current and former homeless youth and current and former foster
6 youth at no extra cost during academic or campus breaks and next
7 give priority to current and former homeless youth and current
8 and former foster youth for housing that is open for occupation
9 during the most days in the calendar year.

10 (2) Each institution of higher education shall develop a
11 plan to ensure that current and former homeless youth and
12 current and former foster youth can access housing resources as
13 needed during and between academic terms, including during
14 academic and campus breaks, regardless of whether the campus
15 maintains student housing facilities.

16 (b) An institution of higher education shall develop a rapid
17 rehousing program to assist current and former homeless youth
18 and current and former foster youth enrolled at the institution
19 of higher education to provide navigation services on the
20 institution of higher education's campus to conduct outreach and
21 assessment and connect current and former homeless youth and
22 current and former foster youth with housing and other related
23 services.

24 (c) An institution of higher education shall designate a
25 staff member who is employed in the financial aid office, or
26 another appropriate office or department as determined by the
27 institution of higher education, to serve as a homeless and
28 foster youth liaison. The homeless and foster youth liaison
29 shall be responsible for understanding the financial aid process
30 and identifying services available and appropriate for current

1 and former homeless and foster youth enrolled at the institution
2 of higher education. The homeless and foster youth liaison shall
3 assist current and former homeless youth and current and former
4 foster youth in applying for and receiving Federal and State
5 financial aid and other available services.

6 (d) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, an
7 institution of higher education may grant resident status to a
8 student who resides in this Commonwealth and is nineteen (19)
9 years of age or under at the time of enrollment, regardless of
10 how long the student has lived in this Commonwealth, if the
11 student is determined to be a homeless youth or foster youth at
12 any time during the four years immediately preceding the
13 student's enrollment.

14 (e) An institution of higher education shall provide tuition
15 waivers for current and former homeless youth and current and
16 former foster youth. The following shall apply:

17 (1) A current or former homeless youth or current or former
18 foster youth shall be exempt from paying any tuition at an
19 institution of higher education, regardless of the current or
20 former homeless youth or current or former foster youth's
21 receipt of a scholarship or grant if:

22 (i) The current or former homeless youth or current or
23 former foster youth is enrolled at the institution of higher
24 education on or before the date that the current or former
25 homeless youth or current or former foster youth reaches twenty-
26 five (25) years of age.

27 (ii) The current or former homeless youth or current or
28 former foster youth is enrolled as a candidate in a degree
29 program.

30 (iii) The current or former homeless youth or current or

1 former foster youth has filed for Federal and State financial
2 aid.

3 (2) If a current or former homeless youth or current or
4 former foster youth receives a scholarship or grant for
5 postsecondary education and is enrolled before the recipient
6 reaches twenty-five (25) years of age as a candidate in a degree
7 program at an institution of higher education, the scholarship
8 or grant shall be applied to the tuition for the current or
9 former homeless youth or current or former foster youth before
10 applying a waiver under this section to the tuition.

11 (3) A current or former homeless youth or current or former
12 foster youth who is exempt from tuition under this subsection
13 shall continue to be exempt until the earlier of:

14 (i) five years after first enrolling as a candidate for a
15 degree program at an institution of higher education; or

16 (ii) the date that the current or former homeless youth or
17 current or former foster youth is awarded a degree.

18 (4) On or before June 1 of each year, an institution of
19 higher education shall report to the board on the aggregate and
20 disaggregate number of current or former homeless youth and
21 current or former foster youth who:

22 (i) Received a tuition exemption under this subsection
23 during the prior academic year.

24 (ii) Received a tuition exemption under this subsection at
25 any point during the current or former homeless youth's or
26 current or former foster youth's enrollment at the institution
27 of higher education.

28 (iii) Earned a degree from the institution of higher
29 education during the prior academic year.

30 (5) On or before September 1 of each year, the board shall:

1 (i) Compile the reports received under paragraph (3).

2 (ii) Submit the compilation of reports to the General
3 Assembly.

4 (f) For purposes of this section, a student who is verified
5 as a former homeless youth under subsection (g) shall retain
6 that status for a period of six (6) years from the date of
7 admission to an institution of higher education.

8 (g) As used in this section, the following words and phrases
9 shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection unless
10 the context clearly indicates otherwise:

11 "Foster youth." An individual under eighteen (18) years of
12 age, or if a court retains dependency jurisdiction under 42
13 Pa.C.S. § 6351(j) (relating to disposition of dependent child),
14 an individual up to twenty-one (21) years of age who is:

15 (1) under the care and responsibility of the Commonwealth
16 and is placed in foster care, as defined in 45 CFR 1355.20
17 (relating to definitions), under 42 Pa.C.S. § 6351 or 6352
18 (relating to disposition of delinquent child); or

19 (2) placed under a voluntary placement agreement under 55
20 Pa. Code § 3130.65 (relating to voluntary placement agreement).

21 "Homeless youth." An individual under twenty-five (25) years
22 of age, who has been verified, in the case of a former homeless
23 youth, at any time during the twenty-four (24) months
24 immediately preceding the receipt of the student's application
25 for admission by an institution of higher education, as an
26 unaccompanied youth, under the McKinney-Vento Homeless
27 Assistance Act (Public Law 100-77, 101 Stat. 482), by at least
28 one of the following:

29 (1) A homeless assistance program, as defined by the
30 Department of Human Services.

1 (2) The director, or the director's designee, of a Federal
2 TRIO program or a Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for
3 Undergraduate Programs program.

4 (3) A financial aid administrator.

5 (4) A designated homeless and foster youth liaison or
6 McKinney-Vento coordinator in a school district or the
7 Department of Education.

8 "Institution of higher education." As defined in section
9 118(c).

10 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.