

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2058

Introduced by Assembly Member Mayes

February 17, 2016

An act to add Article 3.7 (commencing with Section 11340) to Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to CalWORKs.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2058, as introduced, Mayes. CalWORKs Educational Opportunity and Attainment Program.

Existing law requires each county to provide cash assistance and other social services to needy families through the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program using federal, state, and county funds. Under existing law, a recipient of CalWORKs is required to participate in welfare-to-work activities for a specified number of hours each week as a condition of eligibility for aid. Existing law authorizes certain welfare-to-work participants to engage in adult basic education in satisfaction of these work requirements.

Existing law establishes the Cal-Learn Program, under which a recipient of CalWORKs aid who is under 19 years of age and who does not have a high school diploma or its equivalent is required to participate in the program as a student attending school on a full-time basis. Existing law provides for a supplement to, or a reduction in, a Cal-Learn participant's aid grant based on his or her performance in school.

This bill would create the CalWORKs Educational Opportunity and Attainment Program to provide CalWORKs recipients with an education bonus, in an unspecified amount, each month after the attainment of a

high school diploma or its equivalent, an associate’s degree, or a bachelor’s degree, if the diploma or degree was earned while the recipient was receiving CalWORKs assistance. The bill would require a recipient, when applying for an education bonus, to submit evidence of completion of the educational program to the county. The bill would also require the State Department of Social Services to develop a process for verifying educational achievement. The bill would establish the CalWORKs Educational Opportunity and Attainment Support Fund, and would provide that moneys in the fund be used, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to support the program. By imposing additional administrative duties on counties, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Article 3.7 (commencing with Section 11340) is
2 added to Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and
3 Institutions Code, to read:

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5 Article 3.7. CalWORKs Educational Opportunity and
6 Attainment Program

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8 11340. (a) This article shall be known, and may be cited, as
9 the CalWORKs Educational Opportunity and Attainment Program.

10 (b) The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

11 (1) California is expected to spend one hundred thirty-six billion
12 dollars (\$136,000,000,000) on health and human services programs
13 in 2016, which is by far the largest state budget expenditure, while
14 total education spending for kindergarten, grades 1 to 12, inclusive,
15 and higher education programs is less than seventy billion dollars
16 (\$70,000,000,000) per year.

1 (2) California has the fifth largest Temporary Assistance for
2 Needy Families (TANF) cash grant in the nation, and the second
3 largest amongst the 10 largest states, yet poverty remains a
4 persistent problem.

5 (3) We must recognize that California’s problems of poverty
6 and inequality do not stem from a lack of safety net programs.

7 (4) California needs to invest in programs that elevate people
8 out of poverty rather than helping people live better in poverty.

9 (5) This act is intended to provide incentives for CalWORKs
10 recipients to pursue education, thereby improving the opportunities
11 and outcomes for adults and children in the CalWORKs program.

12 11341. (a) A CalWORKs recipient may apply to receive an
13 education bonus in the following amounts:

14 (1) ____ dollars (\$____) per month for completion of high
15 school or its equivalent.

16 (2) ____ dollars (\$____) per month for completion of an
17 associate’s degree.

18 (3) ____ dollars (\$____) per month for completion of a
19 bachelor’s degree.

20 (b) The amounts listed in subdivision (a) are not cumulative. A
21 recipient shall receive the highest monthly bonus to which he or
22 she is entitled.

23 11342. (a) When applying for an education bonus, a recipient
24 shall submit evidence of completion of the educational program
25 to the county. A recipient is not eligible unless both of the
26 following criteria are satisfied:

27 (1) The recipient graduated from an accredited educational
28 institution.

29 (2) The recipient attained the diploma or degree while receiving
30 CalWORKs assistance.

31 (b) The State Department of Social Services shall develop a
32 process for verifying educational achievement.

33 11343. The CalWORKs Educational Opportunity and
34 Attainment Support Fund is hereby established in the State
35 Treasury. The moneys in the fund are available, upon appropriation
36 by the Legislature, for the support of CalWORKs Educational
37 Opportunity and Attainment Program.

38 SEC. 2. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that
39 this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to
40 local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made

- 1 pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division
- 2 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

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