

AB 2289: Young Parents' Right to Education

Assemblymember Shirley Weber (D – 79)

SUMMARY

AB 2289 establishes a state-wide family and sick leave policy for young parents in grades 6-12 to opt into in order to support their academic success and be able to bond with and care for their children.

BACKGROUND

In 2015, over 24,000 children were born to individuals between the ages of 15 and 19 in California. Thirty percent of teenage girls who drop out of high school cite pregnancy or parenthood as a primary reason. Pregnancy and parenting contribute significantly to high school drop-out rates among teen girls. This rate is even higher for Latinx and Black teens, at nearly 40 percent. Far too often young parents have to choose between being able to parent their child and completing their education.

Title IX and California law preserve the right to equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of sex. Yet, pregnant and parenting students continue to face overwhelming, system-enforced obstacles to graduating and receiving an education of equal quality to that of their peers, and hence experience low graduation rates. These impediments vary across school districts and include:

- Varying levels of support and engagement from their schools while absent;
- Inconsistent access to excused “family leave” absences, with male parents often having no access to bonding time;
- Inconsistent definitions across districts of “reasonable amount of time” to make up work, which is not always aligned to the individual circumstances and/or in support of a student’s goal to graduate;
- Encouragement to pursue alternative schools that may not fulfill A-G requirements needed for college entrance; and
- A lack of awareness of parenting student rights under Title IX and California law.

SPECIFICALLY, THIS BILL

Provides a minimum of 8 weeks of protected parental leave for pregnant and parenting students to have prior to the delivery of their baby, if needed and up to a year after the child’s birth. Schools would be required to develop independent study plans to help students stay on track to graduate and prepare for higher education. In addition, parenting students have at least 4 days of excused absences throughout the school year to care for a sick child without a doctor’s note.

The Young Parents’ Right to Education Act aids young pregnant and parenting students to be able to parent their child without sacrificing their education while creating a consistent policy across the state.

SUPPORT

ACT for Women & Girls (sponsor)
ACCESS Women’s Health Justice (sponsor)
Black Women for Wellness (sponsor)
California Latinas for Reproductive Justice (sponsor)
California Legislative Black Caucus
California Legislative Women’s Caucus
California State PTA
ACLU Center for Advocacy & Policy
Alliance for Boys and Men of Color
American Academy of Pediatrics
Asian Americans Advancing Justice
Asian and Pacific Islander Forward Movement
Brighter Beginnings
California Federation of Teachers
California Immigrant Policy Center
California Nurse-Midwives Association
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
California Partnership
California School Nurses Organization
California Voices for Progress
California Women's Law Center
Center on Reproductive Rights and Justice, Berkeley Law
Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative
Coalition for Humane Immigration Rights of LA
Community Health Councils

El Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indigena Oaxaqueno
El Nido Family Centers
El Quinto Sol de America
Equal Rights Advocates
Fathers and Families of San Joaquin Valley
Fresno Barrios Unidos
Fresno Center for New Americans
Junior Leagues of California State Public Affairs Committee
KHEIR Clinic
Khmer Girls in Action
Korean Community Center of the East Bay
Korean Resource Center
Latino Coalition for a Healthy California
Madera Coalition
Maternal & Child Health Access
Mi Familia Vota
Mid-City CAN
Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project
NARAL Pro-Choice California
National Center for Youth Law
National Council of Jewish Women, California
PALS for Health
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Public Health Justice Collective
Roots Community Health Center
San Diego LGBT Community Center
Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network
South Asian Network
South East Asia Resource Action Center
Stewards for Healthy Communities and Families
Street Level Health Project
Teen Success, Inc.
The Cambodian Family
Village Connect, Inc.
Vision y Compromiso
Voices for Progress
Women's Foundation of CA
Youth Alliance

STATUS

Appropriations

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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