



SENATOR DAVE CORTESE

SB 333

California SOAR (Success, Opportunity, & Academic Resilience) Guaranteed Income Program

SUMMARY

SB 333 establishes a statewide guaranteed income pilot program titled the **California SOAR (Success, Opportunity, & Academic Resilience) Guaranteed Income Program** to provide approximately 15,307 12th-grade students experiencing homelessness with direct cash assistance to support their transition out of high school and their access to employment and postsecondary education.

ISSUE & BACKGROUND

A staggering number of youth live in California without stable and safe housing. Within California's K-12 school system, approximately 270,000 students are experiencing homelessness, according to a 2020 [report](#) by UCLA's Center for the Transformation of Schools. This number has increased by over 48 percent in the past decade, likely substantially higher due to COVID-19.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines "homeless children and youth" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. According to Census Data ([DataQuest](#)), approximately 15,307 students experiencing homelessness were enrolled in the 12th grade during the 2022-2023 academic year. Statistically, only about half (50%) of these students enroll in college. However, [data](#) tells us that an overwhelming majority of youth experiencing homelessness wish to pursue careers that require some form of postsecondary education.

Postsecondary education has become increasingly necessary for people to exit homelessness and poverty and enter into financial stability. However, the significant costs associated with enrolling in postsecondary education pose a substantial barrier to low-income individuals, especially youth experiencing homelessness who often have no income. Those youth experiencing homelessness who do enroll in college are

sometimes subject to the "summer melt" phenomenon, which is when students who have every intention of attending college in the following fall never actually enroll, in part due to a lack of financial resources. Students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, and first-generation students are disproportionately impacted by "summer melt."

The summer following high school graduation is a critical time for youth. During this transition period, youth lose the robust support system provided by schools, which includes food assistance, shelter, and school counselors, and must learn how to navigate adulthood. For youth experiencing homelessness, the transition to adulthood and becoming responsible for their care and well-being can be incredibly challenging due to unstable housing conditions and unmet basic needs.

Guaranteed income is a cost-effective policy solution to poverty and inequality among marginalized communities. The Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration ([SEED](#)) in Stockton gave 125 individuals an income at or below the city's median income with a guaranteed income of \$500 per month for two years. The unconditional cash enabled recipients to find full-time employment improved their mental and physical health, and alleviated financial scarcity, creating new opportunities for recipients. In Santa Clara County, the ongoing Transition-Aged Youth Basic Income Pilot Program has supported participating former foster youth in securing stable housing, improving their financial health, and continuing or returning to their educational careers. Moreover, recent [research](#) tells us that direct cash transfers, such as guaranteed income, can play a crucial role in helping youth to exit homelessness sustainably.

THIS BILL

In recognition of the need to support youth experiencing homelessness during the bridge between

high school graduation and postsecondary education or employment, SB 333 establishes a statewide guaranteed income program, "CalSOAR." This program will provide direct cash assistance to youth beginning on April 1, 2026, through August 1, 2026. This program will be administered by the Department of Social Services in collaboration with identification data from the Department of Education. The bill defines an eligible participant as a 12th-grade student who is homeless as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act. Additionally, the bill seeks to create protections from any impact on public assistance programs, student financial aid, and the California Earned Income Tax Credit. Lastly, the bill directs the department to evaluate the program that measures educational and economic security outcomes for award recipients.

SUPPORT

Economic Security Project Action **(Co-sponsor)**
End Poverty in California (EPIC) **(Co-sponsor)**
Mayors for a Guaranteed Income **(Co-sponsor)**
County of Santa Clara **(Co-Sponsor)**
Young Invincibles **(Co-sponsor)**
Generation UP **(Co-sponsor)**

AIDS Healthcare Foundation
Alameda County Office of Education
All Home
Alliance for Children's Rights
Bay Area Asset Funders Network
Bill Wilson Center
Building Skills Partnership
California Coalition for Youth
California Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO
California State PTA
Children Now
City and County of San Francisco
Collaborising
Community Action Partnership of Orange County
Community Financial Resources
Community Health Councils
County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors
Disability Rights California
Education Justice Academy
Five Keys
Food Recovery Network
Friends Committee on Legislation of California
Glide
Indivisible CA State Strong
Indivisible California
Indivisible California StateStrong
John Burton Advocates for Youth

LA Best Babies Network
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank
Miracle Messages
Mission Neighborhood Health Center
National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter
NASW-CA Region I/SW Department
No Kid Hungry California
Orange County United Way
Public Health Advocates
San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR)
San Francisco-Marin Food Bank
San Jose-Evergreen Community College District
Second Harvest of Silicon Valley
Share Our Strength
Silicon Valley Community Foundation
The Children's Partnership
United Parents and Students
United Way California Capital Region
United Ways of California
Universal Income Project
Voices for Progress
Western Center on Law & Poverty

OPPOSITION

None

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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