



SUPPORT THE TUITION & FEE WAIVER SENATE BILL 251 (Senator George K. Muñoz)

Students in Permanent Guardianships Deserve Access to Higher Education

THE ISSUE

Research shows that beyond academic knowledge and skills, educational attainment is linked to measures of personal stability and well-being, including physical/psychological health and poverty level. Youth who spend time in foster care, including those who are in permanent guardianships, face an educational disadvantage as compared to their peers. Only 2.5 percent graduate from a four-year college while fewer than 2 percent of youth formerly in foster care complete a bachelor's degree before the age of 25. This is unacceptable when compared with the national data that reports 24 percent of the general population obtain their bachelor's degree before the age of 25 (Casey Family Programs).

THE OPPORTUNITY

New Mexico's Tuition Waiver Law already provides young people who aged out of foster care or were adopted from foster care after age 14 free tuition to state educational institutions. Young people who were placed in permanent guardianships should also be eligible for the tuition waiver. The tuition waiver bill address this by:

- Removing the financial barrier to post-secondary education
- Promoting permanence for youth impacted by foster care, including those in relative placements

SEE REVERSE FOR FAQ'S

Support the Tuition & Fee Waiver, Senate Bill 251 (Senator George K. Muñoz)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does the bill do?

This bill makes the tuition waiver available to youth impacted by foster care who are placed with grandparents or other relatives through permanent guardianships.

Why do we need it?

A tuition waiver for foster youth was passed in 2014, giving young people who are in foster care the day before their 18th birthday or who were adopted from foster care after their 14th birthday access to free tuition at state colleges and universities. However, foster youth who are placed with grandparents or other relatives through permanent guardianships are not eligible. This bill makes the tuition waiver available to this similarly-situated group of young people.

Who will administer it?

When requested by a young person, New Mexico's Children, Youth and Families Department is responsible for providing a tuition waiver letter to that young person verifying they were in foster care. The young person then presents the letter to the school they will attend.

What will it cost?

Senate Bill 251 does not have an appropriation. The education institutional where the eligible student enrolls will forgo tuition and fees for that student.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

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