

Assembly Bill 1572 (Campos)

Student Transportation for Success Act of 2015

(As introduced 01/04/2016)

Summary

Absenteeism rates are a serious problem in California schools. During the 2014-2015 school year, approximately 8% of all public school students in California missed 18 or more days of school. Research demonstrates that chronic absenteeism – particularly for low-income children – is associated with lower academic performance and greater likelihood of being pushed out of school.

The inability to afford transportation is one of the most frequently cited barriers that low-income youth face in attending school. AB 1572 will help address this issue by guaranteeing safe and free transportation to low-income students in K-12 who have trouble getting to school.

Background

For low-income students, improving attendance is a key pathway to ensuring that they are able to succeed in school and thrive as adults.

Chronic absenteeism, especially among elementary school students, has long-term negative effects. Students who miss school at an early age are more likely to struggle academically and, in later years, to be pushed out of school altogether. As a result, one of the major impacts of school absence is the trapping of youth in the cycle of juvenile crime, gang involvement, substance abuse, and incarceration. Attending school regularly is especially critical for children from families living in poverty who are less likely to have the resources to help children make up for lost time in the classroom.

According to a 2015 report by the California Attorney General, poverty is a significant cause of school absence, and over 75% of chronically absent students are low-income. **The inability to afford transportation to and from school is one of the most frequently cited barriers that low-income**

youth face in attending school. School buses are no longer sufficient, as their funding is continually being reduced and routes are being consolidated or cut. A survey of Oakland youth found that 61% of students reported that they sometimes use their lunch money to ride the bus.

In order to prevent low-income and disadvantaged children from being trapped in the cycle of poverty, underemployment and incarceration, California needs to enact comprehensive policies to remove structural barriers that keep them from obtaining an education, such as the lack of adequate transportation.

This Bill

AB 1572 would help increase opportunities for California's disadvantaged youth by ensuring that students who attend the poorest schools don't face barriers in getting to school.

How that transportation is provided will be determined by each local educational agency in coordination with various state and local stakeholders. Local educational agencies will be empowered to determine the most effective strategies to get their community's disadvantaged children to school – school buses, public transit passes, safe walking routes, or other strategies.

Support

- Children's Defense Fund – CA (Sponsor)
- Western Center on Law & Poverty (Sponsor)
- Youth Justice Coalition (Sponsor)
- 9to5, National Association of Working Women (Sponsor)

For More Information

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