

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 729 Session of 2023

INTRODUCED BY ROZZI, BULLOCK, MADDEN, CIRESI, HANBIDGE, SANCHEZ, DELLOSO, CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, KAZEEM, HILL-EVANS, HOHENSTEIN, GUENST, PARKER, RABB, SOLOMON, FIEDLER, CONKLIN, FREEMAN, KINKEAD, N. NELSON AND FLEMING, MARCH 28, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MARCH 28, 2023

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled "An  
 2 act relating to the public school system, including certain  
 3 provisions applicable as well to private and parochial  
 4 schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the  
 5 laws relating thereto," in preliminary provisions, providing  
 6 for homeless youth at institutions of higher education; and,  
 7 in fostering independence through education, providing for  
 8 housing priority.

9 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

10 hereby enacts as follows:

11 Section 1. The act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known  
 12 as the Public School Code of 1949, is amended by adding sections  
 13 to read:

14 Section 130. Homeless Youth at Institutions of Higher  
 15 Education.--(a) Each institution of higher education that  
 16 maintains student housing facilities shall give priority for  
 17 housing to current and former homeless youth. The following  
 18 shall apply:

19 (1) Each institution of higher education that maintains  
 20 student housing facilities open for occupation during school

1 breaks or on a year-round basis shall give first priority to  
2 current and former homeless youth for residence in the housing  
3 facilities that are open for uninterrupted year-round occupation  
4 and provide housing to current and former homeless youth at no  
5 extra cost during academic or campus breaks and next give  
6 priority to current and former homeless youth for housing that  
7 is open for occupation during the most days in the calendar  
8 year.

9 (2) Each institution of higher education shall develop a  
10 plan to ensure that current and former homeless youth can access  
11 housing resources as needed during and between academic terms,  
12 including during academic and campus breaks, regardless of  
13 whether the campus maintains student housing facilities.

14 (b) An institution of higher education shall develop a rapid  
15 rehousing program to assist current and former homeless youth  
16 enrolled at the institution of higher education to provide  
17 navigation services on the institution of higher education's  
18 campus to conduct outreach and assessment and connect current  
19 and former homeless youth with housing and other related  
20 services.

21 (c) An institution of higher education shall designate a  
22 staff member who is employed in the financial aid office, or  
23 another appropriate office or department as determined by the  
24 institution of higher education, to serve as a homeless youth  
25 liaison. The homeless youth liaison shall be responsible for  
26 understanding the financial aid process and identifying services  
27 available and appropriate for current and former homeless youth  
28 enrolled at the institution of higher education. The homeless  
29 youth liaison shall assist current and former homeless youth in  
30 applying for and receiving Federal and State financial aid and

1 other available services.

2 (d) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, an  
3 institution of higher education may grant resident status to a  
4 student who resides in this Commonwealth and is nineteen (19)  
5 years of age or under at the time of enrollment, regardless of  
6 how long the student has lived in this Commonwealth, if the  
7 student is determined to be a homeless youth at any time during  
8 the four (4) years immediately preceding the student's  
9 enrollment.

10 (e) An institution of higher education shall provide tuition  
11 waivers for current and former homeless youth. The following  
12 shall apply:

13 (1) A current or former homeless youth shall be exempt from  
14 paying any tuition at an institution of higher education,  
15 regardless of the current or former homeless youth's receipt of  
16 a scholarship or grant if:

17 (i) The current or former homeless youth is enrolled at the  
18 institution of higher education on or before the date that the  
19 current or former homeless youth reaches twenty-five (25) years  
20 of age.

21 (ii) The current or former homeless youth is enrolled as a  
22 candidate in a degree program.

23 (iii) The current or former homeless youth has filed for  
24 Federal and State financial aid.

25 (2) If a current or former homeless youth receives a  
26 scholarship or grant for postsecondary education and is enrolled  
27 before the recipient reaches twenty-five (25) years of age as a  
28 candidate in a degree program at an institution of higher  
29 education, the scholarship or grant shall be applied to the  
30 tuition for the current or former homeless youth before applying

1 a waiver under this section to the tuition.

2 (3) A current or former homeless youth who is exempt from  
3 tuition under this subsection shall continue to be exempt until  
4 the earlier of:

5 (i) five (5) years after first enrolling as a candidate for  
6 a degree program at an institution of higher education; or  
7 (ii) the date that the current or former homeless youth is  
8 awarded a degree.

9 (4) On or before June 1 of each year, an institution of  
10 higher education shall report to the department on the aggregate  
11 and disaggregate number of current or former homeless youth who:

12 (i) Received a tuition exemption under this subsection  
13 during the prior academic year.

14 (ii) Received a tuition exemption under this subsection at  
15 any point during the current or former homeless youth's  
16 enrollment at the institution of higher education.

17 (iii) Earned a degree from the institution of higher  
18 education during the prior academic year.

19 (5) On or before September 1 of each year, the department  
20 shall:

21 (i) Compile the reports received under paragraph (3).

22 (ii) Submit the compilation of reports to the General  
23 Assembly.

24 (f) For purposes of this section, a student who is verified  
25 as a former homeless youth under subsection (g) shall retain  
26 that status for a period of six (6) years from the date of  
27 admission to an institution of higher education.

28 (g) As used in this section, the following words and phrases  
29 shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection unless  
30 the context clearly indicates otherwise:

1 "Department." The Department of Education of the  
2 Commonwealth.

3 "Homeless youth." An individual under twenty-five (25) years  
4 of age, who has been verified, in the case of a former homeless  
5 youth, at any time during the twenty-four (24) months  
6 immediately preceding the receipt of the student's application  
7 for admission by an institution of higher education, as an  
8 unaccompanied youth, under the McKinney-Vento Homeless  
9 Assistance Act (Public Law 100-77, 101 Stat. 482), by at least  
10 one of the following:

11 (1) A homeless assistance program, as defined by the  
12 Department of Human Services.

13 (2) The director, or the director's designee, of a Federal  
14 TRIO program or a Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for  
15 Undergraduate Programs program.

16 (3) A financial aid administrator.

17 (4) A designated homeless youth liaison or McKinney-Vento  
18 coordinator in a school district or the Department of Education.

19 "Institution of higher education." As defined in section  
20 118(c).

21 Section 2602.1-K. Housing priority.

22 (a) Housing.--Each institution of higher education that  
23 maintains student housing facilities open for occupation during  
24 school breaks or on a year-round basis shall give first priority  
25 to individuals eligible under section 2602-K(c) for residence in  
26 the housing facilities that are open for uninterrupted year-  
27 round occupation and provide housing to individuals eligible  
28 under section 2602-K(c) at no extra cost during academic or  
29 campus breaks and next give priority to individuals eligible  
30 under section 2602-K(c) for housing that is open for occupation

1 during the most days in the calendar year.

2 (b) Plans.--Each institution of higher education shall  
3 develop a plan to ensure that individuals eligible under section  
4 2602-K(c) can access housing resources as needed during and  
5 between academic terms, including during academic and campus  
6 breaks, regardless of whether the campus maintains student  
7 housing facilities.

8 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.