

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 2721

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE DOUGLAS.

6265H.01I

JOSEPH ENGLER, Chief Clerk

AN ACT

To amend chapter 173, RSMo, by adding thereto one new section relating to liaisons for vulnerable students at public institutions of higher education.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the state of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Chapter 173, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto one new section, to be known as section 173.2542, to read as follows:

173.2542. 1. This section shall be known and may be cited as the "Success for Homeless and Foster Youth in Higher Education Act".

2. As used in this section, the following terms mean:

(1) "Foster youth", any individual in the care, custody, or guardianship of the children's division of the department of social services in the foster care program for any six of the seventy-two months immediately prior to such individual's eighteenth birthday;

(2) "Homeless youth", any individual under twenty-five years of age who has been verified, at any time during the six years prior to such individual's enrollment in an institution, as a homeless child or youth as defined in 42 U.S.C. Section 11434a(2) by at least one of the following:

(a) A governmental or nonprofit agency that receives federal, state, or municipal funding to provide services to homeless persons or that is otherwise sanctioned to provide these services by a homeless continuum of care organization;

(b) An attorney appointed by the court to represent the youth;

(c) A local education agency liaison for homeless children and youth designated as such pursuant to 42 U.S.C. Section 11432(g)(1)(J)(ii) or a school social worker;

EXPLANATION — Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted from the law. Matter in **bold-face** type in the above bill is proposed language.

18 (d) A human services provider or public social services provider funded by the
19 state to provide services for homeless children and youth, including health services,
20 mental or behavioral health services, substance use disorder services, or public
21 assistance or employment services;

22 (e) A law enforcement officer designated as a liaison to the homeless population
23 by a law enforcement agency or department within the state;

24 (f) The director of a federal TRIO program or his designee;

25 (g) A court-appointed special advocate (CASA) employee or volunteer;

26 (h) A financial aid administrator;

27 (i) An admissions counselor;

28 (3) "Institution", a public institution of higher education that is subject to the
29 coordinating board for higher education under section 173.005.

30 3. (1) Each institution shall designate a homeless and foster student liaison
31 within such institution's financial aid office. The liaison shall be responsible for
32 applying the provisions of the federal Higher Education Act as set forth in 20 U.S.C.
33 Section 1070, et seq., pertaining to the independent student status and financial aid
34 eligibility of current and former homeless youth and foster youth, and shall assist these
35 students, both current and prospective, in applying for federal and state financial aid
36 and other assistance for which they may be eligible.

37 (2) The department of higher education and workforce development shall create
38 and publish a searchable directory of homeless and foster student liaisons designated
39 under subdivision (1) of this subsection. Such list shall be accessible to the public and
40 shall be updated annually by the department.

41 4. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, an institution may grant
42 resident status to a student who resides in Missouri and is nineteen years of age or under
43 at the time of enrollment, regardless of how long such student has resided in the state, if
44 such student is determined to have been homeless at any time during the two years
45 immediately preceding such student's enrollment.

46 5. In order to ensure that current and former homeless youth and foster youth
47 have access to stable housing, an institution that offers student housing may develop a
48 plan to provide that students who are homeless youth or foster youth have access to
49 housing resources as needed during and between academic terms. The plan may grant
50 such students first priority for housing placement and provide that they be placed in the
51 institution's housing facility that remains open for occupation during the most days in a
52 calendar year.