



March 31, 2022

Honorable Connie Leyva
Chair, Senate Education Committee
1021 O St., Rm. 6740
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 1341 (Cortese) – California SOAR (Success, Opportunity, & Academic Resilience) Guaranteed Income Program - SUPPORT

Dear Chair Leyva,

On behalf of All Home, we write in support of SB 1341 (Cortese), which would provide a crucial lifeline to 12th grade students experiencing homelessness for their transition out of high school and into employment or postsecondary education.

All Home is a Bay Area organization that advances regional solutions to disrupt the cycles of poverty and homelessness and create more economic mobility for people with extremely low incomes. As both a means to help students find stable housing and build income and job prospects, this program advances multiple aspects of our mission.

According to Census Data, there were approximately 15,000 students experiencing homelessness who were enrolled in the 12th grade in California during the 2020-21 academic year. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act supports the enrollment and education of students experiencing homelessness. California school districts utilize McKinney-Vento funds, among other federal funds such as those from the American Rescue Plan Act, to provide educational support for K-12 students experiencing homelessness. However, these supports cease once a student graduates. There are no dedicated, ongoing state funds designated to assist these students during the summer months following high school graduation, a time when they are exiting a robust support system and attempting to navigate adulthood with limited resources.

The majority of students experiencing homelessness aspire to attend post-secondary education. Moreover, data tells us that an overwhelming majority of youth (over 90%) experiencing homelessness wish to pursue careers that require some form of postsecondary education. In the end, about half (50%) of these students do enroll in college, a number that has grown over recent years thanks to various efforts by school districts, community-based organizations and advocacy groups. Still, the risk of derailed plans is

extremely high without the means and support to make a successful transition from high school to college or employment. This phenomenon is so common, it even has a name: "summer melt."

In recognition of this need, SB 1341 establishes a statewide guaranteed income pilot program that provides direct, unconditional cash payments to these youth beginning on April 1, 2023 through August 1, 2023. The bill defines an eligible participant as a 12th grade student who is homeless as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act, and who has completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California Dream Act Application.

Guaranteed income is proving to be a cost-effective policy solution to poverty and income inequality among marginalized communities. The Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEED) and the Santa Clara County Transition-Aged Youth Basic Income Pilot Program have both produced life-changing results for recipients. Moreover, recent research tells us that direct cash transfers, such as guaranteed income, can play a crucial role in helping youth to sustainably exit homelessness.

SB 1341 equips youth experiencing homelessness with the financial resources to embark on a path towards stability. The no-strings-attached income model empowers and respects youth to use the funds as they see fit, whether that be entering into stable employment or pursuing higher education. For these reasons, All Home supports SB 1341 and urges your "AYE" vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tomiquia Moss". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tomiquia Moss, Founder and CEO of All Home