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AB 2203 – Priority Registration for CalVet Fee Waiver and GI Benefits Recipients

Summary:

AB 2203 requires the California State University (CSU) and California Community Colleges (CCC) and requests the University of California (UC) to provide priority class registration to students who receive a veterans' dependent or Medal of Honor fee waiver, or the Federal GI Bill Benefits, beginning in the 2028–29 academic year. This ensures eligible veterans, and their dependents can enroll in required courses on time and progress toward their degrees without unnecessary delays.

Existing Law:

California's public postsecondary education system includes the University of California, California State University, and California Community Colleges. Under the Donahoe Higher Education Act, certain students, such as children of veterans with service-connected disabilities or recipients of the Medal of Honor, are eligible for waivers that exempt them from mandatory systemwide tuition and fees.

Problem:

Despite eligibility for fee waivers, many of these students still face challenges in accessing courses that are critical for timely progression toward their degree. Campuses that use priority registration systems often fill high-demand courses quickly, and students

without registration priority may be forced to delay enrollment in required classes. This can extend the time needed to graduate, increase financial strain, and create additional barriers for students who have already overcome significant personal or family challenges. Without a system to guarantee priority enrollment, the intended benefits of the fee waivers, ensuring equitable access to higher education, are incomplete

Solution:

AB 2203 addresses these barriers by requiring California State University and community college districts, and requesting the University of California, to grant priority registration to students who receive eligible fee waivers or federal benefits. Starting in the 2028–29 academic year, these students will be able to enroll in courses before others, ensuring access to high-demand classes and a clearer path to timely degree completion. By pairing fee waivers with priority enrollment, AB 2203 strengthens support for students from military and Medal of Honor families, removes unnecessary obstacles to educational progress, and reinforces California's commitment to equitable access to higher education

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