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U.S. SENATOR *for* CALIFORNIA



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Padilla, Warren, Torres Introduce Legislation to Improve Equity in Higher Education By Helping Students Access Basic Needs

June 10, 2021

*BASIC Act would invest \$1 billion to help
meet students' basic needs including food,
housing, and transportation*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senators Alex Padilla (D-Calif.) and Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), along with U.S. Representative Norma Torres (D-Calif.), introduced the Basic Assistance for Students in College (BASIC) Act, bicameral legislation to ensure college students are able to meet their basic needs

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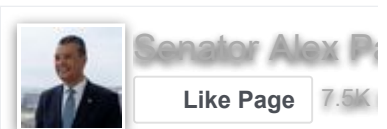


while pursuing their education. U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Ed Markey (D-Mass.) are cosponsors of the bill.

The bicameral legislation provides \$1 billion for grants to ensure institutions of higher learning have the resources they need to support their students' most fundamental needs, and directs the federal government to streamline data sharing across agencies to help students who qualify for aid – particularly Pell Grant recipients and attendees of community colleges and minority-serving institutions – access it.

“We cannot let our students go hungry or sacrifice their health in order to afford a higher education,” **Senator Padilla said.** “We cannot turn a blind eye to the growing crisis of poverty among college and university students. The BASIC Act will help students focus on their goal – graduating. For these students to compete in a modern workforce we must give them the tools they need to succeed.”

“Far too many college students struggle to meet their basic needs while they get their education – and the pandemic has made this problem even worse. As students take on a mountain of student loan debt, they shouldn’t have to choose between paying tuition and eating or living in safe housing. Our bill will help ensure college students



Senator Alex Padilla
21 hours ago

CONGRATULATIONS Diego on your graduation from kindergarten to 1st grade, here we come!

283

12

3



Senator Alex Padilla
on Saturday

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can succeed without going hungry or struggling to meet other basic needs,” **Senator Warren said.**

“A college degree is a valuable asset for the 21st Century workforce, but it cannot come at the expense of basic needs,” **Rep. Norma J. Torres said.** “A student preoccupied by hunger is a student distracted from learning. The BASIC Act empowers schools to meet the needs of their students, coordinates assistance across federal agency lines, and provides resources so no student is forced to choose between college credits and food or rent. I thank Senators Padilla and Warren for joining me in this cause, and urge our colleagues in both Congressional chambers and from both sides of the aisle to support this vital bill for our students and our future workforce.”

The BASIC Act provides for two-year Planning Grants – up to \$50,000 per institution and \$40 million in total – for basic needs research and plan development to address unmet needs, including access to food, housing, transportation, child care, health care, and technology.

The legislation also provides for Implementation Grants – up to \$1 million per institution and \$960 million in total – to execute on the plans they develop over five years. To ensure that the students most in need of help are enrolled, the BASIC Act also directs the Department of Education to

graduation from kindergarten. 🎓
1st grade, here we come!



21h



Senator Alex Padilla
@SenAlexPadilla
Five years after Pulse, I stand with the LGBTQ+ community to remember the 49 souls lost in this horrific mass shooting. Honored that my bill with [@RepDarrenSoto](#) will designate Pulse as a memorial to honor the victims & their enduring legacy.[losangelesblade.com/2021/06/10/sen...](https://www.losangelesblade.com/2021/06/10/sen...)

Senate passes ...
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Jun 12, 2021

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coordinate with the Departments of Agriculture, Housing and Urban Development, and Health and Human Services to share data identifying students who may be eligible for federal aid programs.

This legislation builds on Senator Padilla's previous work to permanently expand SNAP benefits for college students as co-lead of the *Student Food Security Act* with Senators Warren, Murphy, and Sanders.

Dr. Michael Brown, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of California:

"The challenges faced by today's economically diverse college and university students are varied and disparate, but overwhelmingly connect to a lack of access to affordable basic needs—housing, food, child care, health care, technology and transportation costs continue to grow and constrain students' resources, and have threatened or derailed far too many academic pursuits. I heartily applaud the crucial investments made in the BASIC Act, allowing colleges and universities to provide students of every background with the flexible support and tools needed to remain on-track in higher education. Approaching complex challenges with practical, adaptive solutions like this one provides current and future students with the assurance that they will not just succeed in higher education, but thrive."



Eloy Ortiz Oakley, California Community

Colleges Chancellor: “Ensuring community college students have access to basic needs services and supports throughout their educational journey is essential to their success. This is why we are proud to stand by Senator Alex Padilla as he introduces the BASIC Act. The BASIC act fosters collaboration across agencies to increase participation in basic needs programs and prioritizes data to scale high impact strategies. This holistic approach to addressing food insecurity, homelessness and student success will help our students meet their higher education goals.”

Joseph I. Castro, California State University

(CSU) Chancellor: “Awareness among college students of basic needs programs is a critical first step in ensuring those students thrive academically – they can focus on their studies and progress toward college completion rather than struggle to pay for basics such as food, housing and transportation. This is particularly relevant for many California State University students who face these challenges as 50 percent of undergraduates come from low-income households and are Pell eligible. I applaud Senator Padilla’s steadfast support in increasing students’ knowledge about available resources to support college completion – these resources are important facilitators in helping to reach the goals of the CSU’s Graduation Initiative 2025.”



Dr. Sara Goldrick-Rab, President and Founder of the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice: “The BASIC Act is a critical investment in our nation’s economic recovery that maximizes federal and state basic needs programs, cross-agency data sharing, and investments that will support #RealCollege students to degree completion. At a time when three in five students were already experiencing food and/or housing insecurity, two-thirds experienced reduced wages and total job loss, and institutions face declining enrollment, the BASIC Act is a timely investment that will improve equity, student well-being, and institutional resources to ameliorate the effects of the pandemic.”

Victoria Montalvo, UCSA board member and incoming External Vice President-Elect at Associated Students of UC Irvine: “Amidst a global pandemic, securing basic needs continues to be a struggle for all students. The students of the University of California are extremely grateful for the work Senator Padilla and Representative Torres are doing to ensure our students have a roof over our head and food on the table. We here at the University of California Student Association are in strong support of the BASIC Act and urge others to do the same.”

Abby J. Leibman, President & CEO of MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger: “Even before COVID-19, college



students were struggling with food insecurity, and in the wake of the pandemic, many of those students face even greater barriers to their well-being and academic success. For many years, we have tried to dispel the myth that college students are exclusively teenagers who are being supported by their parents. In truth, they are often men and women who are working and supporting their families — parents, children, and others — while trying to keep up with their studies. We are grateful to Senator Padilla for recognizing this reality and taking leadership to introduce the BASIC Act, which will make significant steps in making sure that all students can meet their most basic needs, including food.”

Miriam Lipschutz, Challah for Hunger: “No student should have to choose between food and their education. 3 in 5 students are struggling with basic needs insecurity during COVID-19, and 1 in 3 students struggled with food insecurity before the pandemic. The BASIC Act would create needed streamlined communication between agencies to increase access to federal programs to support student basic needs. It also centers equity in its investment in students through grants by prioritizing community colleges and Pell Grant recipients. Now is the time to invest in students and recognize that basic needs must be met for all students to succeed in the classroom.”



Endorsing organizations include: American Association of Community Colleges, American Student Association of Community Colleges (ASACC), California Community Colleges, California State University System, Challah for Hunger, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, University of California, UC Student Association, Student Senate for California Community Colleges, and Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP).

A detailed fact sheet on the BASIC Act is available [HERE](#).

(<http://www.padilla.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/BASIC-Act-One-Pager.pdf>)

A copy of the bill is available [HERE](#).

(<http://www.padilla.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/ROM21684.pdf>)

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