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H.717

Introduced by Representatives McGill of Bridport, Arsenault of Williston,
Berbeco of Winooski, Brumsted of Shelburne, Burrows of West
Windsor, Casey of Montpelier, Christie of Hartford, Cina of
Burlington, Cordes of Lincoln, Elder of Starksboro, Farlice-
Rubio of Barnet, LaMont of Morristown, Logan of Burlington,
McCann of Montpelier, Pajala of Londonderry, Priestley of
Bradford, Rachelson of Burlington, Roberts of Halifax, and
Templeman of Brownington

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Education; postsecondary education; homeless youth; youth exiting
foster care; liaison

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require
postsecondary schools in Vermont to designate an official liaison to students
experiencing homelessness and students exiting the foster care system, as well
as develop policies requiring priority housing and class enrollment options and
fee waivers for such students.

An act relating to supports to help students experiencing homelessness and
students exiting the foster care system succeed in postsecondary educational
institutions

1 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

2 Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. § 181 is added to read:

3 § 181. STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS AND STUDENTS
4 EXITING THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

5 (a) Student Liaison Officer. Each postsecondary school operating in
6 Vermont shall designate an official liaison for students experiencing
7 homelessness and students exiting the foster care system, to be called the
8 Student Liaison Officer. The Liaison shall be responsible for understanding
9 the provisions of the federal and State law pertaining to financial aid eligibility
10 of current and former foster youth and students experiencing homelessness,
11 including unaccompanied homeless youth, and for identifying services
12 available and appropriate for enrolled students who fall under one or more of
13 these categories. The Liaison shall inform current and prospective students
14 about student financial aid and other assistance available to youth experiencing
15 homelessness and current and former foster youth and assist such students in
16 applying for and receiving federal and State financial aid, including the
17 eligibility of such students as independent students under the Higher Education
18 Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1087vv (definition of independent student).

19 (b) Class enrollment. The board of trustees or other governing body of
20 each postsecondary school operating in Vermont shall adopt and ensure
21 enforcement of a policy that gives students experiencing homelessness or

1 exiting the foster care system priority in class enrollment. The policy shall
2 ensure such students have access to classes despite work obligations,
3 transportation issues, or other barriers they may experience at a higher rate
4 than other students.

5 (c) Housing. The board of trustees or other governing body of each
6 postsecondary school operating in Vermont shall adopt and ensure
7 enforcement of a policy that gives students experiencing homelessness or
8 exiting the foster care system priority in accessing existing on-campus housing.
9 The policy shall require students experiencing homelessness to be enrolled at
10 least half-time in order to access on-campus housing. The policy shall also
11 include a plan to provide students experiencing homelessness with housing
12 during school breaks.

13 (d) Fees. The board of trustees or other governing body of each
14 postsecondary school operating in Vermont shall adopt and ensure
15 enforcement of a policy that allows for waivers of registration fees and
16 laboratory fees for students experiencing homelessness or exiting the foster
17 care system.

18 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

19 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.