



The Student HOMES Coalition is a student-led collective of higher education advocacy organizations fighting for affordable, accessible, and abundant student Housing Opportunities for Maximizing Educational Success (HOMES).

(916) 248-4686 | studenthomescoalition@googlegroups.com

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Student Housing Crisis Act of 2023 (AB 1630) Fact Sheet

Asm. Eduardo Garcia (AD 36)

Bill Summary

This bill would grant ministerial approval and modify building requirements for affordable off-campus student housing within 1,000 ft of college and university campuses, provided they meet certain development standards.

Background

Data shows 35% of all college and university students across the UC, CSU, and CCC face housing insecurity. Furthermore, 5% of UC, 11% of CSU, and 19% of Community College students experience homelessness each year. The housing crisis is acutely affecting the ability of students to achieve a higher education degree, with housing representing roughly half the total cost for those at CSUs and UCs.

To address this, the Legislature has taken significant actions to both fund and stimulate affordable student housing construction on UC, CSU, and CC campuses. However, unpredictable funding cycles, land constraints, institutional capacity issues, and legal battles mean the vast majority of California higher education institutions, especially Community Colleges and CSUs, cannot build housing for all of their students.

Students instead rely on a dwindling number of private off-campus housing options to make up the difference. Just under half of UC students, 90% of CSU students, and 99.9% of Community College students live off-campus, totaling 2.3 million. Students have an extremely strong need for off-campus housing, especially units that are deed-restricted and affordable.

Problem

Students attending campuses without affordable housing are left with few options. Developers cannot use traditional affordable housing financing mechanisms for student housing projects as most affordable housing programs do not allow student tenants. This means that off-campus affordable housing for students does not exist as constructing affordable housing for students is financially infeasible. Single-family zoning and other forms of density control near universities limit students' ability to live within proximity to their classes.

Furthermore, as the entitlements for housing projects take 12-18 months to acquire depending on size, with CEQA litigation extending that timeline even further, housing demand outpaces construction speed. This delay and lack of construction cause students to experience increased rent pressures, forcing them to live further away from campus and frequently face housing insecurity. These restrictions create long commutes and homelessness due to a lack of options.

Solution

AB 1630 creates an innovative tool for off-campus affordable student housing construction, reducing demand for capacity-constrained on-campus housing and providing affordable options for students currently living off-campus.

The bill applies to all land within 1,000 ft. of any UC, CSU, Community College, or private 4-year non-profit accredited university campus, so long as 20% of units are guaranteed to low-income students and faculty with the remaining 80% being leased through a tiered process reserving the right of first refusal to students and faculty, housing projects will be exempt from density restrictions and allowed to build up to 40 ft. in height or 135% of existing height limits, whatever is greater. Furthermore, altered standards for parking and other zoning restrictions will apply, with projects considered ministerial and subject to streamlined approval.

Projects developers must pay a prevailing wage and student eligibility for affordable housing is determined using a Cal Grant framework. This bill will not apply in industrial zones, near oil wells or highways, in areas with sensitive environmental conditions, nor to any projects that involve the demolition of deed-restricted affordable housing or rent-controlled housing in areas of concentrated poverty.

Support

- Student HOMES Coalition (co-source)
- UC Student Association (co-source)
- Generation Up (co-source)
- Student Senate for California Community Colleges (co-source)
- Cal State Student Association (co-source)
- Young Invincibles (co-sponsor)
- Housing Action Coalition (co-sponsor)