Summary:
AB 1747 would take important steps toward addressing the growing crisis of hunger on California’s college campuses.

Background:
Opportunities for low-income youth to escape poverty and climb into the middle class have narrowed over the past two decades. Several reports have documented the decline in low-income students attending college. The wealth and asset drain that resulted from the mortgage crisis and prolonged economic recession has meant that fewer working class families have the resources to leverage in order to support their children in securing a college degree.

There have been increasing reports of college students who are limited in their opportunities to thrive in college by hardships like homelessness and hunger.

Since a person with a college degree or vocational certificate from an accredited school is less likely to remain poor or to slip into poverty, California should find ways to support low-income college students, not only to reduce hardships, but also to reduce barriers to graduation and support investments already committed to this student demographic through Cal Grants and public college funding.

The Assembly Select Committee on Campus Climate held a hearing in November 2016 on how colleges and universities address student food insecurity and student homelessness issues. AB 1747 is the next step in connecting students with available resources to help improve campus climate and a student’s overall academic success.

Purpose:
AB 1747 offers small, but meaningful steps toward supporting students struggling to prevent hunger by:

- Requiring Universities & Colleges receiving public funds to accept the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card through which low-income Californians receive CalFresh and CalWORKs benefits and to make services available to students without fee or surcharge.
- Encouraging Universities & Colleges to participate in their counties’ CalFresh Restaurant Meal program to prevent hunger among elderly, disabled & homeless students.
- Establishing a program to improve coordination between Campus Food Pantries and California Food Banks.
- Improving access to funds supporting CalFresh outreach on campus.

Previous Legislation:
AB 832 (Weber) 2013-14 – This bill would have required all convenience stores and bookstores at the UC, CSU, and community colleges to accept the use of EBT cards.

Support:
Western Center on Law and Poverty (Sponsor)

Opposition:
None

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