

# AB 2289: Young Parents' Right to Education

Assemblymember Shirley Weber (D – 79)

## SUMMARY

AB 2289 establishes a state-wide family and sick leave policy for young parents in grades 6-12 to opt into in order to support their academic success and be able to bond with and care for their children.

## BACKGROUND

In 2015, over 24,000 children were born to individuals between the ages of 15 and 19 in California. Thirty percent of teenage girls who drop out of high school cite pregnancy or parenthood as a primary reason. Pregnancy and parenting contribute significantly to high school drop-out rates among teen girls. This rate is even higher for Latinx and Black teens, at nearly 40 percent. Far too often young parents have to choose between being able to parent their child and completing their education.

Title IX and California law preserve the right to equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of sex. Yet, pregnant and parenting students continue to face overwhelming, system-enforced obstacles to graduating and receiving an education of equal quality to that of their peers, and hence experience low graduation rates. These impediments vary across school districts and include:

- Varying levels of support and engagement from their schools while absent and inconsistent access to excused “family leave” absences, with male parents often having no access to bonding time;
- Inconsistent definitions across districts of “reasonable amount of time” to make up work, which is not always aligned to the individual circumstances and/or in support of a student’s goal to graduate;
- Encouragement to pursue independent study that may not fulfill A-G requirements needed for college entrance; and
- A lack of awareness of parenting student rights under Title IX and California law.

## SPECIFICALLY, THIS BILL

Provides up to 6 weeks of parental leave for births without complications, up to 8 weeks for a cesarean birth and provides up to 4 weeks for the parent not giving birth. The absences due to the parental leave would still generate ADA credit for school attendance, meaning state costs would remain similar to that if the student did not become a parent. Schools would be required to develop independent study plans to stay on track to graduate and prepare for higher education.

The Young Parents’ Right to Education Act aids young pregnant and parenting students to be able to parent their child without sacrificing their education while creating a consistent policy across the state.

## SUPPORT

ACT for Women & Girls (sponsor)  
ACCESS Women’s Health Justice (sponsor)  
Black Women for Wellness (sponsor)  
California Latinas for Reproductive Justice (sponsor)  
California Legislative Black Caucus  
California State PTA

## STATUS

Introduced

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Tiffany Boyd  
Office of Assemblymember Shirley Weber  
916-319-2079  
Tiffany.Boyd@asm.ca.gov