



ASSEMBLYMEMBER — DISTRICT 26

**Patrick Ahrens**

**P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, September 11, 2025

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## **California Legislature Passes Assemblymember Patrick Ahrens' AB 243 to Reduce Barriers to Higher Education for At-Risk Youth**

**SACRAMENTO, CA** – Assemblymember Patrick Ahrens' (D-Silicon Valley) legislation to reduce barriers to our higher education institutions for youth who are involved in the juvenile justice or child welfare systems passed its final legislative hurdle today and now moves to the Governor's desk for consideration of his signature.

[Assembly Bill \(AB\) 243](#) will require higher education institutions to accept an attestation from a local education agency, county probation department, or welfare department as proof of financial independence for the purposes of admissions or financial aid applications.

*Assemblymember Ahrens said, "I signed into law, AB 243 will break down bureaucratic barriers so that California's most at-risk students can pursue their higher education dreams and increase the likelihood that they graduate as productive and contributing members of society while decreasing the chances they face incarceration as an adult."*

Under existing law, these systems-involved youth often encounter challenges providing necessary proof of their financial independence from their parents or the need for medical, disability, or other accommodation, which creates a sometimes-insurmountable barrier for accessing post-secondary education. This legislation creates a streamlined process where local governments can better assist at-risk youth in gaining access to higher education institutions. AB 243 is sponsored by the County of Santa Clara.

"This bill ensures the County and other local governments can help youth involved in the juvenile justice or child welfare systems to pursue their dreams of higher education," said James R. Williams, County Executive for the County of Santa Clara. "In partnership with Assemblymember Patrick Ahrens, we are committed to removing barriers to higher education that disproportionately affect Latino and Black youth and prevent young people from achieving their goals."

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[Assemblymember Patrick Ahrens](#) represents the Silicon Valley in the California State Assembly for District 26. He serves on the Assembly Committees on Budget, Business and Professions, Communications and Conveyance, Rules, Transportation, and Budget Subcommittee No. 2 on Human Services. Assemblymember Ahrens is the Co-Chair of the California Legislative Technology & Innovation Caucus, and a member of the California Legislative Jewish and Bay Area Caucuses.