



## Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations, Inc.

Kevin M. Aslanian  
Executive Director  
[Kevin.aslanian@ccwro.org](mailto:Kevin.aslanian@ccwro.org)

Grace A. Galligher  
Directing Attorney  
Steve Konhoff,  
Director of Development  
1111 Howe Avenue,  
Suite 150  
Sacramento,  
CA 95825-8551  
Tel. (916) 736-0616  
Fax (916) 736-2645  
Cell (916) 712-0071  
[ccwro.org](http://ccwro.org)

### Do Availability of Jobs Have an Impact on the Number of CalWORKs Recipients Attending Secondary Educational Activities?

Since the inception of the AFDC and CalWORKs work programs, parents trying to attain self-sufficiency through education have faced strong resistance from program administrators.

SB 1041 was supposed to give participants a 24-month opportunity to select a component in which they wanted to participate.

Under current law, the participant meets with the WtW worker. They jointly decide which component to select. However, rarely do participants have a real option because they are told that they must cooperate with the WtW worker or endures the devastating WtW sanctions. Thus, the option is usually what the WtW worker suggests which reflects the county policy.

CCWRO has made several suggestions to eliminate this phenomenon but were rejected outright by counties and CDSS:

1. Mail the participant the options available for him/her to choose, before or after the assessment, and have the par-

icipant return his/her chosen option to the WtW worker;

2. Allow the participant to make his/her choice on-line.

As evidenced in TABLE # 1 below, the percentage of unduplicated participants allowed attendance in “secondary education” has declined. Some of the administrators allege that this decline is due to the improvement of the economy.

TABLE # 1 reveals that even when the unemployment rate went down, the rate of WtW participants in secondary education did not decline, but did decline upon the enactment of the SB 1041 provisions.

In 2006, the unemployment rate was 4.9% and 10% of the unduplicated participants were participating in a secondary education/SIP component. That 10% remained constant even when the unemployment rate doubled, until the enactment of SB 1041 in 2012. In 2013 the unemployment rate went down by 20% and in 2014, it went down by 30%

from 2012. These are significant reductions triggered by SB 1041.

Moreover, the community college attendance rate has no correlation with the unemployment rate. When the unemployment rate was the lowest at 4.7%, there were 47,118 CalWORKs students.

When the unemployment rate was 6.6% in 2003 there were 40,822 CalWORKs students. There were 40,671 CalWORKs students in 2009 when the unemployment rate was the highest at 12.3%.

**CONCLUSION** - In reality, the reason why CalWORKs recipients attend or do not attend secondary education has no relationship to the economy.

The real reason has everything to do with the administrators of the program controlling who can go to college and who cannot. For all practical purposes, under the current WtW statutory scheme, participants are not given a choice as to what path to embark on towards self-sufficiency. Putting it bluntly, welfare administrators have a “father knows best” mentality.

**TABLE #1 - Secondary Education Attendance for CalWORKs Recipients**

Year/ December	UI Rate	CalWORKs Recipients in Commu- nity College	Unduplicated Participants	Potential Student Vulnerable to WtW Sanctions	Secondary Education	Self Initiated Program Participants	Total Education	Percentage of Unduplicated Participants in Education
2000	4.7%	47,118	138612	35,946	745	10427	11172	8%
2001	6.4%	40,822	135471	31,644	357	8821	9178	7%
2002	6.8%	43,109	116210	34,446	362	8301	8663	7%
2003	6.6%	40,822	92918	33,153	391	7278	7669	8%
2004	5.8%	39,257	76503	32,579	300	6378	6678	9%
2005	5.1%	34,028	79702	26,508	276	7244	7520	9%
2006	4.9%	27,663	84719	19,174	234	8255	8489	10%
2007	5.8%	27,522	88812	18,804	223	8495	8718	10%
2008	9.2%	37,165	100485	27,332	217	9616	9833	10%
2009	12.3%	40,671	102501	29,738	461	10472	10933	11%
2010	12.2%	39,801	95860	30,516	345	8940	9285	10%
2011	11.2%	36,097	84644	27,357	327	8413	8740	10%
2012	9.7%	31,333	82406	23,238	372	7723	8095	10%
2013	8.3%	30,913	85705	23,874	152	6887	7039	8%
2014	7.2%		89358		141	6036	6177	7%

*Source: State Department of Social Services & California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office*