
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 46
Author: Luz Rivas (D), et al.
Amended: 9/2/21 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE GOVERNMENTAL ORG. COMMITTEE: 11-2, 6/22/21
AYES: Dodd, Nielsen, Allen, Archuleta, Becker, Bradford, Glazer, Hueso,
Kamlager, Portantino, Rubio
NOES: Jones, Melendez
NO VOTE RECORDED: Borgeas, Wilk

SENATE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE: 4-1, 7/6/21
AYES: Hurtado, Cortese, Kamlager, Pan
NOES: Jones

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 5-1, 8/26/21
AYES: Portantino, Bradford, Kamlager, Laird, McGuire
NOES: Jones
NO VOTE RECORDED: Bates

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 73-0, 6/1/21 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: California Youth Empowerment Act

SOURCE: Alliance for Boys and Men of Color
California Association of Student Councils
California Coalition for Youth
California Youth Connection
Mi Familia Vota
San Francisco Youth Commission

DIGEST: This bill creates, until January 1, 2027 and to the extent funds are appropriated, the California Youth Empowerment Act (Act), to address, among other issues, the growing need to engage youth directly with policymakers. In

addition, this bill establishes the California Youth Empowerment Commission (Commission) in state government for the main purpose of providing meaningful opportunities for civic engagement to improve the quality of life for California's disconnected and disadvantaged youth.

Senate Floor Amendments of 9/2/21 reduce the size of the Commission from 25 to 13 Commissioners and allow a parent or guardian to be entitled to receive their actual necessary travel expenses while accompanying the minor on official business of the Commission.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes various social services and programs to address the needs of young people in this state including the California Youth Leadership Project to support and promote civic engagement through scholarships to disconnected and disadvantaged youth.
- 2) Requires, under the Bagley-Keene Open Meetings Act, that all meetings of a state board, or commission, committee, or similar multimember state body be open and all persons shall be permitted to attend any meetings of a state body except as specified. Existing law authorizes a state board, or commission, committee, or similar multimember state body to conduct meetings via teleconference provided certain criteria are met.
- 3) Establishes various state boards, commissions, advisory committees, and other authorized state bodies.

This bill:

- 1) Creates, until January 1, 2027 and to the extent funds are appropriated, the Commission and requires the Commission to consist of 13 voting commissioners, between the ages of 14 to 25 years of age, from specified regions.
- 2) Provides the Commission's main purpose is to provide meaningful opportunities for actual civic engagement to improve the quality of life for California's disconnected and disadvantaged youth. Furthermore, youths involved with the Commission will make meaningful recommendations regarding legislation and policies that impact their own lives and the lives of millions of other youths in California whose voices often go unheard.

- 3) Requires the Commission to do all of the following:
 - a) Examine and discuss policy and fiscal issues affecting the interests, needs, and conditions of the youth of California.
 - b) Formally advise and make recommendations to the Legislature, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Governor on specific legislative issues affecting youth.
 - c) Consult with any existing local-level youth advisory commissions and community-based, grassroots youth-led organizations for input and potential solutions on issues related to youth.
 - d) Publish an internet website to report details relevant to the Commission for the public to view, as specified.
 - e) Publish, on or before January 1, 2024, and annually thereafter, an annual report detailing the activities, issues, demographics, budget, and outcomes of the commission, as specified.
- 4) Provides that the Commission shall be an advisory commission only. There shall be no right or obligation on the part of the state, or parties meeting and conferring, to implement the findings of the Commission without further legislation.
- 5) Requires the Commission to conduct full commission meetings at least every other month, with the first meeting in August 2022, or not later than eight months after funding is made available.
- 6) Requires that meetings of the full commission be open and public and all persons shall be permitted to attend any meetings.
- 7) Requires commissioners to serve as two-year terms and be a resident of California.
- 8) Provides that attending a meeting of the Commission shall be a lawful excuse for a student to be absent from school if approved by the principal or a designated representative, as specified.
- 9) Requires the Governor to appoint an executive director and requires the director, to among other things, be responsible for the hiring of commission staff.

- 10) Requires the executive director of the Commission, within six months of the Commission's establishment, and not later than March 1 of each subsequent year, to do the following:
 - a) Release to the public on its internet website the procedures for the general application process to assist public members in the appointment process and facilitate communications between public members and the appointing powers.
 - b) Have created and made the application publicly available on its internet website.
- 11) Requires the executive director to notify specified institutions of higher learning that the application for an appointment is open, as specified.
- 12) Provides that each public member of the Commission shall receive \$100 per diem while on official business of the Commission. Each member of the Commission shall also be entitled to receive their actual necessary traveling expenses while on official business of the Commission. For commissioners between 14 and 18 years of age, a parent or guardian shall be entitled to receive their actual necessary traveling expenses while accompanying the minor on official business of the Commission.
- 13) Authorizes the Commission to accept gifts and grants from any source to help perform its functions under this bill.
- 14) Creates the Youth Empowerment Commission Fund, which shall be administered by the executive director. Moneys deposited in the account shall be expended, upon appropriation by the Legislature.

Comments

Purpose of the bill. According to the author's office, "youth deserve to have their voices heard. [This bill] will establish a 25-member youth commission that will serve as a statewide advisory body to the state government. At least half of the commissioners must have experienced youth homelessness, foster care, juvenile incarceration, or have special needs to ensure representation from traditionally underserved groups. The Commission's duties will include examining and discussing policy, holding meetings and roundtable discussions with youth advocates and the public, and investing in youth by providing grants, with strict oversight mechanisms, to programs that seek to address youth concerns. Our democracy is better served when everyone, especially youth, is given an

opportunity to contribute their own unique and invaluable perspectives in policy decisions that have far-reaching ramifications for the future of our great state.”

California Youth Empowerment Commission. This bill establishes the Commission, which would formally advise and make recommendations to the Legislature, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Governor on issues and matters that impact the quality of life for California’s disconnected and disadvantaged youth. The Commission would conduct full commission meetings at least every other month, starting in August 2021, and it would publish an annual report to the Legislature, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Secretary of California Health and Human Services, and Governor detailing the activities, issues, demographics, budget, and outcomes of the commission.

Additionally, the Commission would lead community engagement work through the commission’s public hearings, outreach efforts, public awareness campaigns, and grant programs. While there is no current California statewide youth commission, California has experience with this model like the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls or the California Commission on Asian & Pacific Islander American Affairs, both which have been charged with engaging the public to define challenges faced by California’s most vulnerable populations and policy solutions to addresses these challenges to the California State Legislature, the Governor, and the greater public. Models for youth commissions can be found in other states as well as on the local level.

The author argues “that although there are many boards and commissions that advise the state government, there is no commission comprised solely of youth, or that focuses on issues of importance to young Californians. This means that youth do not have a seat at the table when the State makes critical policy decisions that impacts their future.”

Youth Civic Engagement. Data from the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at Tufts University found about a 10% increase in voter participation for youth ages 18 to 29 in the 2020 United States presidential and general election compared to the 2016 presidential and general election. Casting a ballot, however, only represents one form of civic engagement. Civic engagement includes political activism, environmentalism, and community and national service. The CIRCLE data also found an increase in other forms of civic engagement including volunteering for political campaigns and trying to convince other young people to vote. Research has consistently shown that participating in communities and being a part of groups working together on an

issue has numerous benefits for young people themselves. Participation in civic engagement activities can help youth become better informed about current events.

Related/Prior Legislation

SB 421 (Pan, 2021) would have established, until January 1, 2025, the Children's Cabinet of California to serve as an advisory body responsible for improving the collaboration among agencies that provide services to the children and youth of the state. (Held in the Senate Appropriations Committee Suspense File)

AB 1858 (Luz Rivas, 2020), similar to this bill, would have created the Act to address, among other issues, the growing need to engage youth directly with policymakers. In addition, the bill would have established the Commission in state government for the main purpose of providing meaningful opportunities for civic engagement to improve the quality of life for California's disconnected and disadvantaged youth. (Never heard in the Assembly Accountability and Administrative Review Committee)

AB 2252 (DeSaulnier, 2008) would have established the California Youth Council to better ensure that the developmental needs of youth in California are met. (Vetoed by Governor)

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, unknown, ongoing annual costs in the hundreds of thousands to low millions of dollars to establish and continue the operation of the Commission. These costs include support staff for the Commission as well as operating expenses and equipment, and per diem and travel reimbursement costs for commissioners.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/26/21)

Alliance for Boys and Men of Color (co-source)
California Association of Student Councils (co-source)
California Coalition for Youth (co-source)
California Youth Connection (co-source)
Mi Familia Vota (co-source)
San Francisco Youth Commission (co-source)
AFSCME, AFL-CIO
All Saints Church Foster Care Project
Alliance for Children's Rights
American Academy of Pediatrics, California
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

Aspiranet
California Alliance of Child and Family Services
California Immigrant Policy Center
California League of Conservation Voters
Californians for Justice
Children Now
Children's Network of Solano County
Community Health Councils
Doing Good Works
Foster Care Counts
Home Start, INC
Inland Empire United, a Project of Tides Advocacy
John Burton Advocates for Youth
Larkin Street Youth Services
League of Women Voters of California
Lyric
Mental Health Association of San Francisco
Mid-City Community Advocacy Network
MyPath
National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter
National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform
NextGen California
Prevention Institute
Public Counsel
San Francisco Youth Commission
Simi Valley Democratic Club
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
The Children's Partnership
The Los Angeles Trust for Children's Health
The Unity Council
Vacaville Police Activities League
Villines Group, LLC
Voices Youth Centers
Westcoast Children's Clinic
Youth Forward

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/26/21)

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: According to supporters of this bill, “the Commission’s duties will include examining and discussing policy, holding meetings and roundtables with your advocates and the public and investing in youth by providing grants to programs that seek to address youth concerns. Young people, from civil rights to the largest protest in American history this year, have led the way. AB 46 is an opportunity to channel that energy from the streets to the California legislature and sure young people who represent the most marginalized communities have a say in the policies and systems impacting their families and communities.”

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 73-0, 6/1/21

AYES: Aguiar-Curry, Arambula, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Bloom, Boerner Horvath, Bryan, Burke, Calderon, Carrillo, Cervantes, Chau, Chen, Chiu, Choi, Cooley, Cooper, Cunningham, Daly, Davies, Flora, Fong, Frazier, Friedman, Gabriel, Cristina Garcia, Eduardo Garcia, Gipson, Lorena Gonzalez, Gray, Grayson, Holden, Irwin, Jones-Sawyer, Kalra, Kiley, Lackey, Lee, Levine, Low, Maienschein, Mathis, Mayes, McCarty, Medina, Mullin, Muratsuchi, Nazarian, Nguyen, O'Donnell, Petrie-Norris, Quirk, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Reyes, Luz Rivas, Robert Rivas, Rodriguez, Blanca Rubio, Salas, Santiago, Stone, Ting, Valladares, Villapudua, Voepel, Waldron, Ward, Akilah Weber, Wicks, Wood, Rendon

NO VOTE RECORDED: Bigelow, Megan Dahle, Gallagher, Patterson, Seyarto, Smith

Prepared by: Felipe Lopez / G.O. / (916) 651-1530
9/4/21 7:15:07

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