

---

CONSENT

---

Bill No: SB 272  
Author: Laird (D), et al.  
Amended: 3/10/21  
Vote: 21

---

SENATE NATURAL RES. & WATER COMMITTEE: 8-0, 4/13/21  
AYES: Laird, Jones, Allen, Eggman, Grove, Hertzberg, Limón, Stern  
NO VOTE RECORDED: Hueso

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE: 11-0, 4/20/21  
AYES: Umberg, Borgeas, Caballero, Durazo, Gonzalez, Hertzberg, Jones, Laird, Stern, Wieckowski, Wiener

---

**SUBJECT:** State government: gender-neutral terms: California Conservation Corps

**SOURCE:** California Department of Insurance

---

**DIGEST:** This bill increases the age of eligibility to enroll in a local corps from 18-25 to 18-26; and makes changes to specified codes to use gender-neutral language.

**ANALYSIS:**

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the California Conservation Corps (CCC) in the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) to administer the state's conservation corps program.
- 2) Provides for the formation of certified community conservation corps, defined to mean a nonprofit public benefit corporation, as defined, or an agency operated by a city, county, or city and county, that is certified by the CCC as meeting specified criteria, including:

- a) A community conservation corps consists of supervised work crews of young men and women who serve for one year, with the possibility of extension. Corps members engage in recycling and litter abatement projects, and natural resource management projects, as specified, among others.
  - b) The corps' program is based upon a highly disciplined work experience that includes an educational component. The educational component includes enrollment in a vocational education program, public or charter high school, or postsecondary community college.
  - c) A community conservation corps consists of an average annual enrollment of not less than 50 corps members between 18 and 25 years of age.
- 3) Enacts provisions related to public resources, including forestry.
  - 4) Regulates the business of insurance in this state.
  - 5) Places the Department of the California Highway Patrol under the control of a civil executive officer known as the Commissioner of the California Highway Patrol who is appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate, as specified.

This bill:

- 1) Increases the age of eligibility to enroll in a local corps from 18-25 to 18-26.
- 2) Makes changes to specified codes to use gender-neutral language.

## **Background**

There are 14 state-certified community conservation corps (local corps) in California. Their mission is to preserve and protect the environment and provide job skills training and educational opportunities to young adults. They are community-based organizations that engage young adults in service projects addressing recreation, conservation, disaster response, and community needs. Through a term of service that could last from a few months to a year, corps members gain a high school diploma or GED, life skills, paid work experience, and job training. Each local corps works with or operates a charter school to provide educational services and help corps members connect to college and vocational education programs.

*Gender neutral changes.* This bill is consistent with ACR 260 (Low, Resolution Chapter 190, Statutes of 2018) which encouraged the Legislature to engage in a coordinated effort to revise existing statutes and introduce new legislation with inclusive language by using gender-neutral pronouns or reusing nouns to avoid the use of gendered pronouns. That resolution found that “the use of the pronouns ‘he’ or ‘she’ for individuals is not inclusive of all transgender people, nonbinary people who may not ascribe to a particular or fixed gender, or people who otherwise use different pronouns.”

There are a number of universities, states, and other nations that now recognize a nonbinary gender and are taking steps to redraft their rules and laws to be more inclusive and avoid the use of gendered pronouns. In addition, the scientific literature suggests that gender-neutral language can help achieve more than symbolic change; for example, by contributing to the reduction of gender stereotyping and discrimination, and helping to reshape cultural norms.

*Why raise the age of eligibility for local corps to 26?* Capping enrollment for certified local corps at 25 years of age generally made sense for previous generations because that met the demand at the time for the local corps’ services and provided important benefits to the young adults and society. More recently, the local corps and their charter school partners have noted that, on average, it is taking young adults more time to complete their educations and become established in jobs and careers than previous generations. This is especially true for the populations served by the local corps, many of whom are at risk youth who have dropped out of the school system and struggle to find job opportunities that provide a living wage and other benefits. The local corps have noted that authorization to serve 26-year olds would capture a significant proportion of this group while retaining the local corps’ foundational mission of serving young adults.

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

**SUPPORT:** (Verified 4/22/21)

California Department of Insurance (source)

California State Controller Betty Yee

Office of Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis

American Civil Liberties Union California Action

American Council of Life Insurers

Association of California Life & Health Insurance Companies

Democratic Women of Monterey County

Equality California  
Sacramento LGBT Community Center

**OPPOSITION:** (Verified 4/22/21)

None received

**ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:** According to the author, “While California has lead on efforts to promote diversity, equity, and equality, our laws have not kept pace. It’s time we change archaic references within state law that are future forward and adequately represent those who dedicate themselves to our state.”

Prepared by: Catherine Baxter / N.R. & W. / (916) 651-4116  
4/23/21 10:53:09

\*\*\*\* **END** \*\*\*\*