
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Senator Jesse Arreguín, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 1572 **Hearing Date:** June 30, 2026
Author: Alanis
Version: March 26, 2026
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: ML

Subject: *California Interscholastic Federation: officials: registration, certification, and eligibility verification*

HISTORY

Source: Author

Prior Legislation: AB 465 (Bonilla), Ch. 146, Stats. of 2013
AB 346 (Conway), Ch. 52, Stats. of 2010

Support: California Association of Private School Organizations; California Interscholastic Federation; California Teachers Association; Schools Excess Liability Fund

Opposition: None known

Assembly Floor Vote: 72 - 0

PURPOSE

The purpose of this bill is to require California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) officials to annually register through a platform selected by the CIF to verify the official's eligibility to officiate CIF contests, which will, until July 1, 2028, include a statewide and standardized background screening and, commencing July 1, 2028, will include a record of a valid Activity Supervisor Clearance Certificate (ASCC) issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC).

Existing law requires the Department of Justice (DOJ) to maintain state summary criminal history information, as defined, and to furnish this information to various state and local government officers, officials, and other prescribed entities, if needed in the course of their duties. (Pen. Code, § 11105, subs. (a)-(b).)

Existing law defines “state summary criminal history information” to mean the master record of information compiled by the Attorney General pertaining to the identification and criminal history of a person, such as name, date of birth, physical description, fingerprints, photographs, dates of arrests, arresting agencies and booking numbers, charges, dispositions, sentencing information, and similar data about the person. (Pen. Code, § 11105, subd. (a)(2)(A).)

Existing law requires any fingerprint-based criminal history information check required pursuant to any statute to be performed by DOJ. Requires that when a government agency or other entity requests such a criminal history check for purposes of employment, licensing, or certification,

the DOJ must disseminate specified information in response to the request, including information regarding convictions and arrests for which the applicant is presently awaiting trial. (Pen. Code, § 11105, subd. (u).)

Existing law states, notwithstanding any other law, that a human resource agency or an employer may request from DOJ records of all convictions or any arrest pending adjudication involving specified offenses of a person who applies for a license, employment, or volunteer position, in which they would have supervisory or disciplinary power over a minor or any person under their care. Requires DOJ to furnish the information to the requesting employer and to also send a copy of the information to the applicant. (Pen. Code, § 11105.3, subd. (a).)

Existing law requires that a request for records pursuant to the above provision shall include the applicant's fingerprints and any other data specified by DOJ. (Pen. Code, § 11105.3, subd. (b).)

Existing law states that the determination of whether the criminal history record shows that the applicant, employee, or volunteer has been convicted of, or is under pending indictment for, any crime that bears upon the fitness of the individual to have responsibility for the safety and well-being of children, the elderly, the handicapped, or the mentally impaired shall solely be made by the human resource agency or employer. States that DOJ is not required to make such a determination on behalf of any human resource agency or employer. (Pen. Code, § 11105.3, subd. (b)(2)(E).)

Existing law defines, for the purposes of the above provisions, "employer" to mean any nonprofit corporation or other organization specified by the Attorney General that employs or uses the services of volunteers in positions in which the volunteer or employee has supervisory or disciplinary power over a child or children. (Pen. Code, § 11105.3, subd. (f)(2).)

Existing law states that the CIF is a voluntary organization that consists of school and school-related personnel with responsibility for administering interscholastic athletic activities in secondary schools. (Ed. Code, § 33353.)

Existing law authorizes a community youth athletic program to request state and federal level criminal history information from the DOJ for a volunteer coach or hired coach candidate. (Pen. Code, § 11105.3.)

Existing law requires a community youth athletic program to provide written notice to the parent or guardian of any youth participating in the program regarding the program's policies relating to whether the program obtains criminal background checks for hired and/or volunteer coaches. Defines a community youth athletic program as an organization for which the primary purpose is the promotion or provision of athletic activities for youth under 18 years of age and which has adult employees who have supervisory or disciplinary power over children. (Bus. & Prof. Code, § 18900.)

Existing law requires any entity that has a contract with a local educational agency (LEA) to ensure that any employee who interacts with pupils, outside of the immediate supervision and control of the pupil's parent or guardian or a school employee, has a valid criminal records summary. Requires, when the contracting entity performs the criminal background check, the entity to immediately provide any subsequent arrest and conviction information it receives to any LEA that it is contracting with pursuant to the subsequent arrest service. (Ed. Code, § 45125.1.)

Existing law requires all noncertified candidates, prior to assuming a paid or volunteer position to work with pupils in a pupil activity program sponsored by a school district, to obtain an ASCC from the CTC. Indicates that a “pupil activity program” sponsored by a school district includes, but is not limited to, scholastic programs, interscholastic programs, and extracurricular activities sponsored by a school district or school booster club. States that this provision does not apply to a candidate who is required by the school district to clear a DOJ and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) criminal background check prior to beginning the paid or volunteer activities. (Ed. Code, § 49024.)

Existing law requires the CTC to issue an ASCC to candidates serving in a specified position upon verification of the candidate’s personal identification and verification that the candidate meets all professional requirements, as specified. (Ed. Code, § 44258.7.)

Existing law requires that the CTC must submit to the DOJ fingerprint images and related information required by the DOJ of all ASCC candidates for the purposes of obtaining information as to the existence and content of a record of state or federal convictions and state or federal arrests and also information as to the existence and content of a record of state or federal arrests for which the DOJ establishes that the individual is free on bail or on his or her own recognizance pending trial or appeal. States that the criminal history record search response shall be provided in such a manner as to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the individual’s criminal history record and the criminal history record search response shall not be made available by the commission to any school district or county office of education. (Ed. Code, § 44346.5.)

Existing law states that the CTC shall adopt regulations requiring every applicant for a credential, or for the renewal of a credential, to submit reasonable evidence of identification and good moral character. Requires that the adopted rules and regulations specify that an applicant shall not be required to disclose, and the CTC shall not inquire into or consider, any acts or omissions not related to the applicant’s fitness to teach or perform other duties for which he or she is certificated, or which is related to his or her competence to perform the duties authorized by his or her credential. States that the adopted rules and regulations shall also prescribe the notice which shall be supplied to each applicant on the application form, which shall include the following information:

- The offenses which constitute grounds for the mandatory denial or revocation of a credential.
- The offenses for which the commission is authorized to deny or revoke a credential, depending upon the degree of rehabilitation or requalification demonstrated by the applicant.
- The standards under which the commission determines that it shall not investigate or pursue offenses which are not clearly related to an applicant’s fitness or competence to teach or perform other certificated services. (Ed. Code, § 44339.)

Existing law states that if a denial of an application for a certificate is due at least in part to the individual’s state or federal criminal history record, the commission shall provide to the individual a copy of his or her criminal history record search response with the notice of the denial (Ed. Code, § 44346.5.)

Existing law states that each allegation of an act or omission by an applicant for, or holder of, a credential for which the applicant may be subject to an adverse action shall be presented to the CTC. Authorizes the committee with jurisdiction to commence an initial review upon receipt of any of the following:

- Official records of the DOJ, of a law enforcement agency, of a state or federal court, and of any other agency of this state or another state.
- An affidavit or declaration signed by a person with personal knowledge of the acts alleged to constitute misconduct.
- A statement from an employer notifying the commission that, as a result of an allegation of misconduct, or while an allegation of misconduct is pending, a credentialholder has been dismissed, nonreelected, suspended for more than 10 days, or placed pursuant to a final adverse employment action on unpaid administrative leave for more than 10 days, or has resigned or otherwise left employment.
- A notice from an employer that a complaint was filed with the school district alleging sexual misconduct by a credentialholder. Results of an investigation by the committee based on this paragraph shall not be considered for action by the committee unless there is evidence presented to the committee in the form of a written or oral declaration under penalty of perjury that confirms the personal knowledge of the declarant regarding the acts alleged to constitute misconduct.
- An affirmative response on an application submitted to the commission as to any conviction, adverse action on, or denial of, a license, or pending investigation into a criminal allegation or pending investigation of a noncriminal allegation of misconduct by a governmental licensing entity.
- A record of a substantiated report entered into the statewide data system governing ASCC certified candidates. (Ed. Code, § 44242.5.)

States that for the purpose of ascertaining the moral character and true identity of the holder of a credential or an applicant for a credential or the renewal of a credential after jurisdiction to commence an initial review has been established, the commission is authorized to require the production of information, records, reports, and other data from any public agency. States that for the purposes of determining whether jurisdiction exists, the commission is also authorized to require the limited production of records, as specified. Requires that this information shall be provided to the commission within 30 days of the request. Requires that the commission shall maintain the confidentiality of this information, as specified. (Ed. Code, § 44341.)

Existing law requires that an ASCC be issued initially for a five-year period and may be renewed, and requires that the CTC establish a fee for the ASCC. (Ed. Code, § 44258.7.)

Existing law excludes from the definition of an “employee” a person, other than a regular employee, performing services as a sports official, as defined, for an entity sponsoring an intercollegiate or interscholastic sports event, or any person performing services as a sports official for a public agency, public entity, or a private nonprofit organization sponsoring an amateur sports event. Defines a “sports official” as including an umpire, referee, judge, scorekeeper, timekeeper, or other person who is a neutral participant in a sports event. (Labor Code, § 3352.)

This bill requires the CIF to require its officials to annually register through a platform selected by the CIF to verify the official’s eligibility to officiate CIF contests.

This bill requires the platform to consist of all of the following components:

- Until July 1, 2028, a statewide and standardized background screening, and commencing July 1, 2028, a record of a valid ASCC issued by the CTC, including the applicable expiration date.
- A record of rules tests, online training modules, sport-specific annual certifications, and continuing education requirements.
- A record of liability insurance coverage.

This bill requires, commencing July 1, 2028, that the CTC regularly publish a list on its internet website of ASCC holders who have their certificate suspended or revoked by CTC.

This bill requires the CIF, through its chosen platform, to verify that all specified components are complete before an official is deemed and marked as eligible to receive an assignment to officiate.

This bill requires that CIF complete the specified verification annually until July 1, 2028, and requires, commencing July 1, 2028, that the CIF maintain the platform and, as part of the verification requirement, ensure that the chosen platform regularly reviews the list published by the CTC in order to update the eligibility of the officials whose ASCC has been suspended or revoked.

This bill authorizes that only officials who are deemed eligible in the selected platform be assigned to CIF contests by assignors or officiating associations.

This bill requires the CIF to ensure that its participating member schools, school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools can access the platform to verify the eligibility of an official, but shall not have access to the sensitive information in each individual component of the platform.

This bill prohibits the CIF from being considered an employer of officials.

COMMENTS

1. Need for This Bill

The author writes:

AB 1572 is necessary to ensure that California's student athletes compete in safe, fair, and well-regulated environments. By establishing a consistent standard for CIF officials, we can give schools and parents confidence that officials assigned to games are qualified and accountable. This measure will also promote greater transparency and consistency across leagues, reducing uneven enforcement of rules. Ultimately, it strengthens the integrity of high school athletics and reinforces a commitment to protecting the well-being of every student athlete.

2. DOJ Fingerprint Background Checks

State summary criminal history information is the primary record of information compiled by DOJ pertaining to the identification and criminal history of any person. This information includes name, date of birth, physical description, fingerprints, photographs, arrests, dispositions, and similar data. (Pen. Code, § 11105, subd. (a).) Access to a person's summary criminal history information is generally prohibited and only allowed to be disseminated if specifically authorized in statute. "The state constitutional right of privacy extends to protect defendants from unauthorized disclosure of criminal history records. [Citation.] These records are compiled without the consent of the subjects and disseminated without their knowledge. Therefore, custodians of the records, have a duty to 'resist attempts at unauthorized disclosure and the person who is the subject of the record is entitled to expect that his right will be thus asserted.'" (*Westbrook v. County of Los Angeles* (1994) 27 Cal.App.4th 157, 165-66.)

DOJ is only required to furnish state summary criminal history information to statutorily authorized entities or individuals for employment, licensing, or volunteering purposes. (Pen. Code, § 11105.) In addition to the specified entities authorized to receive state summary criminal history information, DOJ may furnish state summary criminal history information to other specified employers upon a showing of compelling need for the information and to any person or entity when they are required by statute to conduct a criminal background check to comply with requirements or exclusions expressly based upon specified criminal conduct. (Pen. Code, § 11105, subds. (a)(13) & (c).)

Existing law requires that any fingerprint-based criminal history check required pursuant to any statute must be requested by DOJ. The agency or entity authorized to receive criminal history information must submit to DOJ fingerprint images and any related information required by DOJ for the purpose of obtaining information as to the existence and content of a record of state or federal arrests, as specified. (Pen. Code, § 11105, subd. (u)(1).) If requested, DOJ must transmit fingerprint images and related information received pursuant to this section to the FBI for the purpose of obtaining a federal criminal history information check. DOJ must review the information returned from the FBI and compile and disseminate a response or a fitness determination, as appropriate, to the agency or entity identified that requested the information. (Pen. Code, § 11105, subd. (u)(2).)

A separate existing statute states that an employer or human resources agency may request from DOJ criminal records of a person involving specified offenses who applies for a license, employment, or volunteer position in which they would have supervisory or disciplinary power over a minor or any person under their care, and further requires DOJ to furnish this information to the requester and applicant. (Pen. Code, § 11105.3, subd. (a).) The list of specified convictions includes sexual battery, a sex offense against a minor, any felony that requires sex offender registration, or if within the last 10 years, any conviction or arrest for child abuse, elder abuse, theft, burglary, or any felony. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 15660, subd. (a).)

3. Existing Background Checks for Youth Sports Programming

Existing law authorizes, but does not require, a community youth athletic program to request state and federal-level criminal history information from the DOJ for a volunteer coach or hired coach candidate. (Pen. Code, § 11105.3) However, individuals must be certified by the CTC in order to work in youth sports, which requires a DOJ background check.

The CTC establishes professional standards, assessments, and examinations for entry and advancement in the education profession. It is required to establish standards for the issuance and renewal of credentials, certificates, and permits for teachers and educators. (Ed. Code, § 44225.)

Existing law requires all noncertified individuals, prior to assuming a paid or volunteer position to work with pupils in a pupil activity program sponsored by a school district, to obtain an ASCC from the CTC. A “pupil activity program” sponsored by a school district includes, but is not limited to, scholastic programs, interscholastic programs, and extracurricular activities sponsored by a school district or school booster club. This provision does not apply, however, to a candidate who is already required by the school district to clear a DOJ and FBI criminal background check prior to beginning the paid or volunteer activities. (Ed. Code, § 49024.)

The CTC must issue an ASCC to candidates serving in a specified position upon verification of the candidate’s personal identification and verification that the candidate meets all professional requirements, as specified. (Ed. Code, § 44258.7) In particular, all ASCC candidates must undergo a DOJ fingerprint criminal background check. (Ed. Code, § 44346.5.) If a denial of an application for a certificate is due at least in part to the individual’s state or federal criminal history record, the CTC shall provide to the individual a copy of his or her criminal history record search response with the notice of the denial (Ed. Code, § 44346.5.)

CTC must adopt regulations requiring every applicant for a credential, or for the renewal of a credential, to submit reasonable evidence of identification and good moral character. The adopted rules and regulations must specify that an applicant shall not be required to disclose, and the CTC shall not inquire into or consider, any acts or omissions not related to the applicant’s fitness to teach or perform other duties for which he or she is certificated, or which is related to his or her competence to perform the duties authorized by his or her credential. The adopted rules and regulations must also prescribe the notice which shall be supplied to each applicant on the application form, which shall include the following information:

- The offenses which constitute grounds for the mandatory denial or revocation of a credential.
- The offenses for which the commission is authorized to deny or revoke a credential, depending upon the degree of rehabilitation or requalification demonstrated by the applicant.
- The standards under which the commission determines that it shall not investigate or pursue offenses which are not clearly related to an applicant’s fitness or competence to teach or perform other certificated services. (Ed. Code, § 44339.)

Each allegation of an act or omission by an applicant for, or holder of, a credential for which the applicant may be subject to an adverse action shall be presented to the CTC. (Ed. Code, § 44242.5)

For the purpose of ascertaining the moral character and true identity of the holder of a credential or an applicant for a credential or the renewal of a credential after jurisdiction to commence an initial review has been established, the CTC is authorized to require the production of information, records, reports, and other data from any public agency. For the purposes of determining whether jurisdiction exists, the CTC is also authorized to require the limited production of records, as specified. This information shall be provided to the CTC within 30

days of the request. The CTC shall maintain the confidentiality of this information, as specified. (Ed. Code, § 44341.)

4. California Interscholastic Federation

The CIF was organized at a high school athletic convention on March 28, 1914, as a voluntary association of schools. Since 1914, the California Department of Education (CDE) has allowed the CIF to regulate interscholastic athletics, and the CIF has been the rule-making body for all of California's K-12 athletics programs since 1917. In 1981, that rule-making authority was expanded to include control over all interscholastic athletics, replacing the CDE in that role.¹

The CIF consists of ten regional sections, each of which is divided into several "leagues," for purposes of scheduling athletic contests, assigning referees, etc. Similar organizations exist in other states. Almost all public, private, and parochial schools in California are CIF members.

The primary responsibilities of CIF are to administer high school athletic programs and to promulgate and enforce rules relating to a student's involvement in athletics—age, semesters in school, scholarship, residence, transfer status, and amateur standing. Such regulations, which are generated by the 1,628 member base of secondary schools, prevent undesirable exploitation of high school students, provide for the welfare of participants, and ensure that interscholastic athletics offer major benefits to students in a safe, rewarding environment.

During the 2025-26 school year, a CIF-related officiating program offered optional background checks through a third-party vendor for referees. CIF primarily sets rules, certification standards, and eligibility requirements, but does not employ the referees directly. Officials are typically members of sport-specific local officiating associations. Those associations or assigning organizations handle training, certification, and sometimes screening requirements.

5. Effect of This Bill

According to the author, existing law requires school employees and contractors, including coaches, to be fingerprinted and for the school to receive subsequent arrest records, but there is no such requirement for game officials to be fingerprinted, unless they are an employee or contractor hired by a school.

This bill requires the CIF to require its officials to annually register through a platform selected by the CIF to verify the official's eligibility to officiate CIF contests.

Relevant to this committee, this bill requires the platform to consist of, until July 1, 2028, "a statewide and standardized background screening," and commencing July 1, 2028, a record of a valid ASCC issued by the CTC, including the applicable expiration date. Thus, until July 1, 2028, CTC will administer a DOJ fingerprint background check, and beginning July 1, 2028, candidates will be required to undergo a DOJ fingerprint background check as part of the ASCC certification process. The author and Committee may consider clarifying in the statute that the "statewide and standardized background screening" means a DOJ fingerprint background check.

¹ See California Interscholastic Federation, *Vision & Mission* <https://www.cifstate.org/about/vision_mission> [as of June 23, 2026].

As discussed above, the background check to which human resources employees or volunteers who work with children are subjected is limited to specified convictions. Those specified convictions include sexual battery, a sex offense against a minor, any felony that requires sex offender registration, or if within the last 10 years, any conviction or arrest for child abuse, elder abuse, theft, burglary, or any felony.

For comparison, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, counselors, and peer support specialists work at behavioral health centers to provide the range of services clients need, including to children. In order to provide treatment, these persons must generally be licensed by their respective professional licensing board. Licensees are required to undergo a fingerprint criminal history check prior to a license being issued. (Bus. & Prof. Code, § 144.) Licensees can be denied a license when the applicant was convicted of a crime within the seven years preceding the date of application, and that crime is substantially related to the qualifications, functions, or duties of the business or profession for which the application is made. (Bus. & Prof. Code, § 480.) There are two exceptions to the seven-year lookback: a serious felony conviction or a crime for which registration as a sex offender is required. (*Ibid.*)

Unlike the existing background checks above, this bill does not contain any time-based limitations on the background check required. Given that sports referees do not supervise children in private, but rather in a highly public setting, the author and Committee may consider implementing a seven-year lookback period unless the person has a conviction for a serious felony or a sex offense.

This bill additionally requires, commencing July 1, 2028, that the CIF regularly publish a list on its internet website of ASCC holders who have their certificate suspended or revoked by CIF. The CIF, through its chosen platform, must verify that all specified components are complete before an official is deemed and marked as eligible to receive an assignment to officiate. The CIF must complete the specified verification annually until July 1, 2028, and requires, commencing July 1, 2028, the CIF must maintain the platform and, as part of the verification requirement, ensure that the chosen platform regularly reviews the list published by the CTC in order to update the eligibility of the officials whose ASCC has been suspended or revoked. This bill authorizes that only officials who are deemed eligible in the selected platform be assigned to CIF contests by assignors or officiating associations. The CIF must ensure that its participating member schools, school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools can access the platform to verify the eligibility of an official, but do not have access to the sensitive information in each individual component of the platform.

6. Argument in Support

The California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) writes:

This bill would require CIF to annually verify the eligibility of its officials to officiate CIF contests by requiring those officials to annually register through a platform selected by CIF for that purpose. The platform would comprise a standardized background screening (and, starting on July 1, 2028, a valid Activity Supervisor Clearance Certificate), a record of understanding of the game, and a record of liability insurance coverage. Under AB 1572, only officials who are deemed eligible in the platform may be assigned to officiate CIF contests. CIF would ensure that member schools can access the platform to verify eligibility but shall not have access to any sensitive information.

CIF has voluntarily instituted a system that would meet the requirements of AB 1572, which will be updated to comply with the Activity Supervisor Clearance Certificate in 2028, and we believe the health and safety of all interscholastic athletics participants—students, parents, coaches, and officials—is worthy of being codified into law. Therefore, we support AB 1572 and urge committee members to vote “aye” on this measure.

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