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**SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION**

**Senator Susan Rubio**

**Chair**

**2025 - 2026 Regular**

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**Bill No:** AB 1578 **Hearing Date:** 6/23/2026  
**Author:** Jackson  
**Version:** 5/22/2026 Amended  
**Urgency:** No **Fiscal:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Brian Duke

**SUBJECT:** State and local officials: sexual harassment training and education: anti-hate speech training

**DIGEST:** This bill requires state and local officials to complete anti-hate speech training as part of existing sexual harassment prevention training, as specified.

**ANALYSIS:**

Existing law:

- 1) Makes it unlawful for an employer, because of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, reproductive health decisionmaking, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, or veteran or military status of any person, to refuse to hire or employ the person, as specified.
- 2) Requires a specified employer with five or more employees to provide at least two hours of classroom or other effective interactive training and education regarding sexual harassment to all supervisory employees and at least one hour of classroom or other effective interactive training and education regarding sexual harassment to all nonsupervisory employees in California, as specified.
- 3) Requires an employer to include prevention of abusive conduct as a component of that training and education.
- 4) Requires an employee who has received the above-described training and education within the prior two years to be given, and required to read and to acknowledge receipt of, the employer's anti-harassment policy, as specified.

- 5) Requires local agency officials to receive sexual harassment prevention training and education if the local agency provides any type of compensation, salary, or stipend to those officials.
- 6) Requires the training and education to include practical examples aimed at instructing the local agency official in the prevention of sexual harassment, discrimination, and retaliation.

This bill:

- 1) Requires an employer that is a state agency or local agency, beginning on January 1, 2028, to also include anti-hate speech training as a component of the sexual harassment training and education for all elected state or local officials.
- 2) Requires the anti-hate speech training to provide practical guidance on recognizing, reporting, engaging or participating in, and confronting speech that vilifies, humiliates, or incites hatred against people based on race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, reproductive health decisionmaking, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, or veteran or military status.
- 3) Provides that a state or local official who serves more than one state agency or local agency only be required to receive training pursuant to this bill once every two years without regard to the number of state agencies or local agencies the official serves.

## Background

*Author Statement.* According to the author's office, "AB 1578 would require elected local and state officials to take of anti-hate speech training as component of their sexual harassment training. This bill recognizes what too many Californians already know. Hate is not abstract. It shapes when people are safe, where they work, and how they move through their own communities. Hate speech from elected officials is the primary impetus of hate crimes. This bill takes the findings of the Commission on the State of Hate and turns them into action. We cannot claim to value equality while ignoring the systems that allow hate to persist. AB 1578 demands that our state respond with clarity, data, and the courage to tell the truth about who is harmed and why. Justice begins with naming harm and building structures that prevent it."

*Trainings for Public Officials.* State law requires local agency officials to complete several mandatory trainings intended to promote ethical conduct and effective governance. Under AB 1234 (Salinas, Chapter 700, Statutes of 2005), members of local legislative bodies and certain designated employees must complete ethics training covering conflicts of interest, misuse of public resources, government transparency, and due process requirements. Officials generally must complete the training within one year of taking office and every two years thereafter.

In 2016, the Legislature enacted AB 1661 (McCarty, Chapter 816, Statutes of 2016) requiring certain compensated local agency officials to complete two hours of sexual harassment prevention training within six months of taking office and every two years thereafter. The training includes information on federal and state sexual harassment laws and practical guidance on preventing harassment, discrimination, and retaliation.

*California Commission on the State of Hate.* Established by AB 1126 (Bloom, Chapter 712, Statutes of 2021), the Commission on the State of Hate (Commission) is intended to monitor and respond to hate incidents in California. According to the [Commission's 2024-25 Annual Report](#), approximately 2.6 million Californians experienced at least one act of hate between 2022 and 2023, while nearly 5 million witnessed an act of hate during the same period. The Commission has also reported increasing harassment, threats, and violence directed at public officials, citing a 2021 survey in which 81% of local public officials reported experiencing such conduct. Among its recommendations, the Commission urged expanding elected officials' training to include information on addressing threats, harassment, hate, and de-escalation strategies.

*New Training Requirement.* This bill incorporates anti-hate speech education into the existing two-hour sexual harassment prevention training required every two years for specified public officials. Sexual harassment training is generally focused on promoting respectful workplace interactions, bystander intervention, and fostering environments free from intimidation and hostility. Anti-hate speech education often addresses broader issues of bias, prejudice, civic discourse, and discrimination based on a wider range of protected characteristics. Both seek to promote respectful workplace interactions, discourage conduct that may contribute to hostile environments, and encourage professional behavior by local officials.

This bill requires state and local agencies, beginning January 1, 2028, to include anti-hate speech training as a part of the existing required training for elected officials. The training must provide practical guidance on recognizing, reporting, participating in, and confronting speech that vilifies, humiliates, or incites hatred

based on protected characteristics under the Fair Employment and Housing Act, including race, religion, national origin, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, and military or veteran status.

**Prior/Related Legislation**

AB 822 (Elhawary, Chapter 714, Statutes of 2025) extended the repeal date of the Commission on the State of Hate to January 1, 2031.

AB 1126 (Bloom, Chapter 712, Statutes of 2021) established the Commission on the State of Hate to provide policy recommendations and public resources to respond to and reduce hate crimes, as specified.

AB 1661 (McCarty, Chapter 816, Statutes of 2016) requires local agency officials to receive sexual harassment prevention training and education, as specified.

AB 1234 (Salinas, Chapter 700, Statutes of 2005) established provisions for ethics training for local government officials and designated employees.

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

**SUPPORT:**

Alameda County Office of Education  
California Legislative LGBTQ Caucus  
Chinese for Affirmative Action  
Equality California  
Fresno Unified School District  
Los Angeles LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce

**OPPOSITION:**

California Baptist for Biblical Values  
California Family Council  
California Teachers Supporting Gender-nonconforming Youth  
Cause: Californians United for Sex-based Evidence in Policy and Law  
Democrats for an Informed Approach to Gender  
Lesbians Advocating for a Resilient Future  
LGB (lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual) Alliance Foundation  
Our Duty  
Pacific Justice Institute

The California Baptist Capitol Ministry  
Women are Real

**ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:** In support of the bill, Equality California writes, “[r]ecent findings from the Commission on the State of Hate show that as many as 7% of California adults have experienced hate and 13% have witnessed it.

“These numbers are even higher for adolescents in the state, with 15% experiencing hate and 30% witnessing it. This rise in hate is occurring within a broader political climate where public officials increasingly use rhetoric that can reinforce harmful stereotypes and legitimize discrimination. Such rhetoric harms communities across California by further marginalizing individuals, undermining feelings of safety, and contributing to the conditions that can incite violence.

“Hate based rhetoric from political leaders can embolden others to express and act on their prejudices. Conversely, responsible and inclusive leadership can help deescalate tensions and reduce harmful attitudes. The words of public officials are not merely expressions of opinion—they shape social norms, influence behavior, and impact people’s lived experiences.

“Recognizing and countering harmful rhetoric is essential to fostering a more inclusive and respectful California. AB 1578 takes an important step by equipping leaders with the tools to understand and address the impact of their words. For these reasons and more, Equality California is proud to support AB 1578 and we respectfully urge your ‘AYE’ vote.”

**ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION:** In opposition to the bill, California Baptists for Biblical Values writes, in part, “[w]e are in firm opposition to Assembly Bill 1578, which would require state and local officials to complete at least one hour of ‘anti-hate speech’ training and education within six months of taking office and every four years thereafter. While the bill claims to address hate, its vague and undefined term ‘hate speech’ creates a dangerous mechanism for government-compelled ideology.

“The legislation requires training that includes ‘information and practical guidance’ on laws prohibiting and correcting ‘hate speech,’ delivered by trainers with ‘expertise in the prevention of hate speech.’ Yet the bill nowhere defines what constitutes ‘hate speech.’ This bill directly conflicts with the Scripture’s clear commands. God’s Word calls believers to ‘speak the truth in love’ (Ephesians 4:15).”

**DUAL REFERRAL:** Senate Local Government Committee (4-2) and Senate Governmental Organization Committee