
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 1578 (Jackson) - State and local officials: sexual harassment training and education: anti-hate speech training

Version: May 22, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 3, 2026

Policy Vote: L. GOV. 4 - 2, G.O. 11 - 3

Mandate: Yes

Consultant: Mark McKenzie

Bill Summary: AB 1578 would require state and local officials to complete training and education related to anti-hate speech as part of existing sexual harassment prevention training and education requirements, beginning on January 1, 2028, as specified.

Fiscal Impact:

- The Civil Rights Department (CRD) estimates costs of approximately \$320,000 in 2027-28 and \$267,000 ongoing for 1.0 PY of attorney staff to develop and update a new training module and other materials, and to research, develop, and adopt regulations necessary for the implementation of the new training. First year impacts include one-time contract costs of approximately \$45,000 for a vendor to translate and provide voice files for the training in five languages, as well as translating online materials. (General Fund, Civil Rights Enforcement and Litigation Fund)
- The California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) indicates that this bill would result in one-time costs of \$150,000, and annual costs of \$750,000 for additional system capacity and staffing to support increased course registrations, customer service needs, course assignments, and program reporting requirements. (General Fund)
- Unknown costs for state agencies to include anti-hate speech training and education as a component of existing training requirements for sexual harassment prevention training and education. Costs for each individual agency are potentially absorbable, but aggregate overall costs across state government could be significant. (General Fund, various special funds)
- Unknown local costs, minor to potentially the low hundreds of thousands statewide, for affected local agencies to update existing sexual harassment prevention training materials to include an anti-hate speech training and education component that is required for all local agency officials. These costs may be state-reimbursable, subject to a determination by the Commission on State Mandates. See Staff Comments. (General Fund)

Background: Existing law establishes the CRD (formerly the Department of Fair Employment and Housing) within the California Housing and Homelessness Agency. Existing law, the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA), 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 that training to nonsupervisory

employees, every two years, as specified. Existing FEHA regulations define employer to include the state of California, cities, counties, special districts, boards, commissions, and any other political or civil subdivision of the state. Existing law requires an employer to include prevention of abusive content and training inclusive of harassment based on gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation, as a component of the training and education regarding sexual harassment. Existing law requires the CRD to develop or obtain two online training courses on the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace in accordance with the above training requirements, and to make the online training courses available on its internet website.

Existing law, as enacted by AB 1234 (Salinas, 2005), requires local agency officials to receive training in ethics within six months of commencing service and every two years thereafter, if the local agency provides any type of compensation, salary, or stipend to those officials. The training mandate applies to members of legislative bodies and other elected officials that serve cities, charter cities, counties, charter counties, and special districts. Local governments must provide information on available training to officials each year, and must keep track of who completes an ethics course for at least five years. Existing law, as enacted by AB 1661 (McCarty, 2016), expanded local agency official training requirements to include sexual harassment prevention training and education under the same framework that applies to ethics training. The training must include information on federal and state sexual harassment laws and practical guidance on preventing harassment, discrimination, and retaliation.

Existing law, as enacted by AB 1126 (Bloom, 2021), establishes the Commission on the State of Hate (Commission) to help the state monitor, prevent, and respond to hate. The Commission issues an Annual State of Hate Commission report to the Governor, the Legislature, and the public to help provide resources and assistance, engage in fact finding and data collection, and collaborate with other subject-matter experts in the fields of hate and public safety to assess trends relating to the state of hate or hate-related crimes. According to its 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 report also found that businesses and public spaces are common locations for hate incidents, with more than one-third of adult victims reporting experiencing hate at a business. The Commission has 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.

Proposed Law: AB 1578 would require an employer that is a state or local agency to include anti-hate speech training as a component of the sexual harassment training and education that must be provided to all elected state or local officials, beginning on January 1, 2028. A state or local official who serves more than one state or local agency must receive this training only once every two years, regardless of the number of agencies the official serves.

The bill would also require the sexual harassment prevention training and education that all local agency officials must receive, as specified, to include anti-hate speech training as a component of the required training and education, beginning on January 1, 2028.

The bill requires the anti-hate speech training specified above to provide practical guidance on recognizing, reporting, engaging or participating in, and confronting speech that vilifies, humiliates, or incites hatred against people based on specified protected characteristics.

Related Legislation: AB 1803 (Lowenthal), which is currently pending in this Committee, is nearly identical to the provisions of this bill that pertain to the training requirements in the FEHA.

AB 1126 (Bloom), Chap. 712/2021, established the Commission on the State of Hate to provide policy recommendations and public resources to respond to and reduce hate crimes, as specified. The repeal date of the Commission was extended to January 1, 2031 with the enactment of AB 822 (Elhawary), Chap. 714/2025.

AB 1661 (McCarty), Chap. 816/2016, required local agency officials to receive sexual harassment prevention training and education, as specified.

AB 1234 (Salinas), Chap. 700/2005, established provisions for ethics training for local government officials and designated employees, as specified.

Staff Comments: By requiring anti-hate speech training and education as part of sexual harassment prevention training for local officials, this bill imposes a state-mandated local program. Following the passage of SB 1234 (Salinas, 2005), local agencies filed a mandate claim seeking reimbursement for costs related to that bill's requirements to provide ethics training for local officials. The Commission on State Mandates partially approved the claim and found that provisions requiring a local agency to provide information on available ethics training courses to its officials at least once annually, and requiring the local agency to maintain training records for five years, constitute a reimbursable state-mandated program (*Local Agency Ethics*, Case No. 07-TC-04). Staff notes that the test claim decision specifically found that providing the ethics training was not a reimbursable activity, since the duty to receive the training is imposed on the local official, not the local agency. The Commission's adopted Statewide Cost Estimate for the Local Ethics Training mandate, which included other reimbursable items specified in AB 1234, was approximately \$19,352 - \$38,194 for initial and first year annual costs, and prospective costs of \$0 - \$11,130 annually. Based upon the existing mandate for local agency ethics training, and the fact that a mandate test claim was not filed following the passage of AB 1661, which imposed sexual harassment prevention training requirements, staff estimates that this bill may result in minor state-reimbursable mandate costs, to the extent a local agency files a reimbursement claim with the Commission.

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