

THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 1578
Author: Jackson (D)
Amended: 5/22/26 in Assembly
Vote: 21

SENATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE: 4-2, 6/17/26

AYES: Durazo, Arreguín, Cervantes, Laird

NOES: Choi, Seyarto

NO VOTE RECORDED: Ashby

SENATE GOVERNMENTAL ORG. COMMITTEE: 11-3, 6/23/26

AYES: Rubio, Archuleta, Ashby, Blakespear, Cervantes, Hurtado, Padilla,
Richardson, Smallwood-Cuevas, Wahab, Weber Pierson

NOES: Valladares, Dahle, Ochoa Bogh

NO VOTE RECORDED: Alvarado-Gil

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 5-2, 8/13/26

AYES: Cervantes, Cabaldon, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

NOES: Seyarto, Dahle

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 58-18, 5/26/26 - See last page for vote

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

SOURCE: Author

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 decision making, 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, starting January 1, 2028, an employer that is a state or local agency, to include anti-hate speech training as a component of the sexual harassment prevention training and education for elected officials;
- 2) Requires the anti-hate speech training must provide practical guidance on recognizing, reporting, engaging or participating in, and confronting speech that vilifies, humiliates, or incites hatred against people based on the protected characteristics of: race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, reproductive health decision making, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, or veteran or military status;

- 3) Specifies that if a state or local official serves more than one state or local agency, the elected official must only receive training once every two years without regard to the number of state or local agencies they serve.

Background

Trainings for local agencies officials. In 2005, the Legislature enacted AB 1234 (Salinas, Chapter 700, Statutes of 2005) to require members of local agencies' legislative bodies to participate in ethics training, if those agencies offer compensation or expense reimbursement to their board members. The local officials who must complete the training include:

- A member of a legislative body or an elected official of the local agency who receives any compensation, salary, stipend, or reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses;
- An employee the local agency's governing body designates to receive the training; and
- A member of the governing body of a school district, county board of education, or charter school, regardless of whether they receive compensation.

The training must cover laws related to:

- Personal financial gain, bribery, and conflict of interests;
- Claiming perks of office, such as gifts and use of public resources for personal purposes;
- Government transparency; and
- Ensuring fair processes, such as due process and incompatible offices.

Local officials must complete the training within one year of their start date and repeat the training every two years. Local agencies must maintain records on the date each local official satisfied the training requirement and the entity that provided the training for at least five years.

In 2016, the Legislature enacted AB 1661 (McCarty, Chapter 816, Statutes of 2016) to require local agency officials that receive compensation to receive two hours of sexual harassment prevention training and education within the first six months of taking office, commencing employment, and every two years thereafter.

This training and education must include information and practical guidance on federal and state sexual harassment policies, including practical examples to instruct local agency officials on preventing sexual harassment.

Commission on the State of Hate. AB 1126 (Bloom, Chapter 712, Statutes of 2021) established 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. So far the Commission has completed three reports. According to the Commission's 2024-2025 Annual Report, "An estimated 8% of Californians over the age of 12 (nearly 2.6 million people) experienced at least one act of hate within a one-year period between 2022 and 2023 and an estimated 15% of Californians (nearly 5 million people) witnessed an act of hate within the same period."

The 2023-2024 Annual Report also states, "There is a growing body of evidence documenting escalating attacks, violence, threats, harassment, and hate against public officials....A 2021 survey found that 81% of local public officials reported experiencing harassment, threats, and violence." The Commission made a number of recommendations in their report, including, "Elected officials often undergo training after being sworn in or appointed. But this training does not always include information about how to address threats, harassment, and hate. Training and onboarding for officials should be expanded to include this. Trainings could range from helping officials prepare for the possibility of threats and harassment to information about how to respond to these incidents. Training could also consist of de-escalation training for use both during and outside of public meetings. Security and staff could also participate in de-escalation training."

Comments

According to the author, "AB 1578 would require elected local and state officials to take 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.”

One training, two goals. Local agencies are subject to a wide variety of laws to ensure that local officials execute their duties without conflict or unseemly behavior. To assist local officials in complying with these requirements and carrying out their responsibilities effectively, state law requires a number of trainings, including: ethics, sexual harassment, and most recently, a fiscal and financial management training. AB 1578 incorporates anti-hate speech education into the existing two-hour sexual harassment prevention training required every two years. 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. However, combining the two subjects into a single training program may reduce the time and attention devoted to each topic and create uncertainty regarding the specific competencies of the trainings.

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

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- 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. (General Fund)

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/12/26)

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

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/12/26)

California Baptist for Biblical Values
 California Family Council
 Cause: Californians United for Sex-based Evidence in Policy and Law
 Democrats for an Informed Approach to Gender
 Fieldstead and Company, INC.
 Lesbians Advocating for a Resilient Future
 Lgb (lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual) Alliance Foundation
 The California Baptist Capitol Ministry

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 58-18, 5/26/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Connolly, Elhawary, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, McKinnor, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Valencia, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NOES: Castillo, Chen, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Ellis, Flora, Gallagher, Jeff
Gonzalez, Hadwick, Hoover, Johnson, Lackey, Macedo, Patterson, Sanchez, Ta,
Tangipa

NO VOTE RECORDED: Alanis, Muratsuchi, Celeste Rodriguez, Wallis

Prepared by: Itzel Vargas / L. GOV. / (916) 651-4119
8/14/26 10:14:44

**** **END** ****