
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 1578
Author: Jackson (D), et al.
Amended: 8/26/26 in Senate
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 agency officials: training on responding to hate: local agency
officials: 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.

Senate floor amendments of 8/26/26 limit this bill to elected state officials and delay implementation for state agencies.

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, that if a state agency provides any type of compensation, salary, or stipend to a state agency official, then all state agency officials of that agency must receive training on responding to hate;
- 2) Requires each state agency official to receive at least one hour of training and education within the first six months of taking office or commencing employment, and every two years thereafter;

- 3) Requires the training and education to include information and practical guidance about how to respond to threats and harassment both during and outside of public meetings, de-escalation training, information about the prevalence of hate incidents, and resources available for victims of hate;
- 4) Permits a state agency or association of state agencies to offer one or more training courses, or sets of self-study materials with tests, to meet the requirements and allows the courses to be taken at home, in person, or online;
- 5) Requires all providers of training courses to provide participants with proof of participation which may include an electronic certificate received upon completion of an online course;
- 6) Allows a state agency to develop its own training or direct elected officials to complete the training developed by the department;
- 7) Defines state agency official as a state elected official;
- 8) Requires, starting January 1, 2028, a local agency that provides any type of compensation, salary, or stipend to a local agency official, to include anti-hate speech training as a component of the sexual harassment prevention training and education for elected local officials;
- 9) 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;
- 10) Permits an elected local agency official to take the training developed by a state agency may satisfy this requirement;
- 11) 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."

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 8/26/26)

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 8/26/26)

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
Fieldstead and Company, INC.

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 this 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 this 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).”

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

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**** END ****