

Date of Hearing: May 6, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1784 (Pellerin) – As Amended April 9, 2026

Policy Committee:	Higher Education	Vote:	10 - 0
	Judiciary		12 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill expands reasonable accommodation and nondiscrimination policy provisions for students to include students experiencing pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions and provides for a leave of absence from course work at a postsecondary education institution for both a student who has given birth or a student whose partner has given birth. The bill also makes several corresponding changes to existing nondiscrimination protections and definitions in current law.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Ongoing Proposition 98 General Fund costs in the low millions of dollars for the California Community Colleges (CCC), collectively statewide, to adopt updated policies, post notices, and provide accommodations. Exact costs will depend on the extent to which a college’s policies need updating relative to this bill’s requirements and how many accommodations it already offers pregnant or recently pregnant students.
- 2) Minor one-time General Fund costs to the CCC Chancellor’s Office to issue guidance on updated policy requirements.
- 3) Minor and absorbable costs to the CSU campuses to update policies and training.
- 4) Minor and absorbable General Fund costs to the UC campuses to update policies and training.

The Legislative Analyst’s Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

AB 1784 updates the California Equity in Higher Education Act to ensure that undergraduate students have the same protections and rights as their graduate student peers. These additional protections come at a crucial time for pregnant and parenting students given the Supreme Court’s decision to strike down the constitutional right to abortion and ongoing attacks to the constitutional right to birth control.

Furthermore, AB 1784 codifies the best practices of the 2024 Title IX regulations in state law, ensuring that the additional protections afforded to students by these overturned federal regulations continue to be accessible to California students.

- 2) **Background.** The federal Title IX program, as well as parallel provisions in the California Education Code, prohibit discrimination against a student in any educational program, or denial of the benefits thereof, on the basis of sex. Both federal and state law define discrimination based on sex to include discrimination based on pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions. For example, existing state law prohibits a college from requiring a pregnant graduate student to take a leave of absence who chooses not to take a leave. Instead, existing law requires a college to make reasonable accommodations for a pregnant graduate student, including permitting a student who chooses to do so to take a leave. Existing law also requires colleges to post these policies at various locations on campus and requires faculty and staff to have training on these policies. However, these requirements protect only graduate students—but not undergraduate students—experiencing pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions, or who recently gave birth. This bill extends these same protections to undergraduate students who are pregnant or experiencing pregnancy-related conditions.

It is unclear to the committee why the provisions of existing California law described above apply only to graduate students, though it may be in an attempt to follow previous federal guidelines issued during the Obama administration. At the time the Legislature enacted provisions in 2014 to align with the federal guidelines, the limitation to graduate students reflected the Obama administration's focus on increasing female graduate participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematic (STEM) fields.

Title IX regulations and guidelines provided by both the Trump and Biden administrations provide similar protections for pregnant undergraduate and graduate students. The 2024 Biden administration regulations also required colleges to provide pregnant students or those experiencing pregnancy-related conditions with the Title IX coordinator's contact information so that the Title IX coordinator could inform the students of their rights to accommodations and protections from discrimination. However, the Trump administration has rejected these additional regulations.

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