

---

# SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

---

**Bill No:** AB 1784 **Hearing Date:** June 17, 2026  
**Author:** Pellerin  
**Version:** April 9, 2026  
**Urgency:** No **Fiscal:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Michelle Nguyen

**Subject:** Postsecondary education: nondiscrimination: pregnancy or pregnancy-related issues.

**NOTE:** This bill has been referred to the Committees on Education and *Judiciary*. A “do pass” motion should include referral to the Committee on *Judiciary*.

## SUMMARY

This bill expands existing law by providing parity between undergraduate and graduate students experiencing pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions by expanding academic protections related to leave of absence policies to undergraduate students and by requiring reasonable accommodations.

## BACKGROUND

Existing federal law:

- 1) Establishes Title IX, providing that, in part, “no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” (United States Code (USC) Title 20, Chapter 38, § 1681 (commonly known as Title IX))
- 2) Outlines the required response, pursuant to Title IX, of a postsecondary higher education institution when the institution is made aware of an alleged sexual harassment incident on campus, which include a requirement for a formal complaint, a grievance procedure for an investigation into whether the incident based on a standard of evidence occurred, a hearing by which advisors are provided an opportunity to cross-examine, and a method of appealing the outcome of the grievance process. (Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 34, Subtitle B, Chapter 1, Part 106, Subpart D, § 106.45)
- 3) Prohibits a postsecondary institution, which receives federal financial assistance, from discriminating in its education program or activity against any student based on the student’s current, potential, or past pregnancy or related conditions. (CFR Title 34, Subtitle B, Chapter 1, Part 106, Subpart D, § 106.40)
- 4) Provides that a postsecondary institution does not engage in prohibited discrimination when it allows a student, based on pregnancy or related conditions, to voluntarily participate in a separate portion of its education program or activity,

provided the postsecondary institution ensures that the separate portion is comparable to that offered to students who are not pregnant and do not have related conditions. (CFR Title 34, Subtitle B, Chapter 1, Part 106, Subpart D, § 106.40)

- 5) Requires that a postsecondary institution not require a student who is pregnant or has related conditions to provide certification from a healthcare provider that the student is physically able to participate in the postsecondary institution's class, program, or extracurricular activity unless:
  - a) The certified level of physical ability or health is necessary for participation in the class, program, or extracurricular activity.
  - b) The postsecondary institution requires such certification of all students participating in the class, program, or extracurricular activity.
  - c) The information obtained is not used as a basis for prohibited discrimination. (CFR Title 34, Subtitle B, Chapter 1, Part 106, Subpart D, § 106.40)
- 6) Requires the postsecondary institution to treat pregnancy or related conditions in the same manner and under the same policies as any other temporary medical conditions with respect to any medical or hospital benefit, service, plan, or policy the recipient administers, operates, offers, or participates in with respect to students admitted to the postsecondary institution's education program or activity. (CFR Title 34, Subtitle B, Chapter 1, Part 106, Subpart D, § 106.40)
- 7) Requires the postsecondary institution to allow the student to voluntarily take a leave of absence from the postsecondary institution's education program or activity to cover, at minimum, the period of time deemed medically necessary by the student's licensed healthcare provider. (CFR Title 34, Subtitle B, Chapter 1, Part 106, Subpart D, § 106.40)

Existing state law:

- 1) Requires each of the following requirements apply to postsecondary educational institutions in this state:
  - a) Prohibit a postsecondary educational institution, solely due to pregnancy or pregnancy-related issues, to require a graduate student to take a leave of absence or withdraw from the graduate program, or to limit the student's graduate studies.
  - b) Requires a postsecondary educational institution to reasonably accommodate pregnant graduate students so they may complete their graduate courses of study and research, and requires that reasonable accommodation include excusing absences that are medically necessary, as required by Title IX.
  - c) Requires that a graduate student—who chooses to take a leave of absence because the graduate student is pregnant or has recently given birth—be

allowed a specified time period to prepare for and take preliminary and qualifying examinations and an extension of at least 12 months toward normative time to degree while in candidacy for a graduate degree, unless a longer extension is medically necessary.

- d) Requires that a graduate student—who is not the birth parent and who chooses to take a leave of absence because of the birth of the student’s child—be allowed a specified time period to prepare for and take preliminary and qualifying examinations and an extension of at least one month toward normative time to degree while in candidacy for a graduate degree, unless a longer period of extension is medically necessary to care for the student’s partner or their child.
  - e) Requires that an enrolled graduate student in good academic standing—who chooses to take a leave of absence because the student is pregnant or has recently given birth—return to the student program in good academic standing following a specified leave period, subject to the reasonable administrative requirements of the institution, unless there is a medical reason for a longer absence, in which case the student’s standing in the graduate program be maintained during that period of absence.
  - f) Requires that an enrolled graduate student in good academic standing—who is not the birth parent and who chooses to take a leave of absence because of the birth of the student’s child—return to the student program in good academic standing following a specified leave period, subject to the reasonable administrative requirements of the institution. (Education Code (EC) § 66281.7)
- 2) Requires that each postsecondary educational institution (1) have a written policy for graduate students on pregnancy discrimination and procedures for addressing pregnancy discrimination complaints, under federal or state law, and (2) notify pregnant and parenting students of the protections provided by Title IX through prominently posting a notice of the Title IX protections on the institution’s website. (EC) § 66281.7)
  - 3) Requires the California Community Colleges (CCCs) and the California State University (CSU), and encourages a satellite campus of the CCC or CSU systems, and encourages the University of California (UC), to provide reasonable accommodations on their respective campuses for a lactating student to express breast milk, breastfeed an infant child, or address other needs related to breastfeeding. (EC § 66271.9)
  - 4) Defines “familial status” to mean one or more individuals under 18 years of age who reside with a parent or a person with care or legal custody of the individual. Stipulates the protections afforded under the definition of familial status extends to any individual who is pregnant, who is in the process of securing legal custody of any individual under 18 years of age, or who is in the process of being given care or custody of any individual under 18 years of age. (Government Code § 12955.2)

**ANALYSIS**

This bill:

- 1) Defines “familial status” to have the same meaning as in existing state law.
- 2) Defines “postsecondary educational institution” as a campus of the UC, the CSU, or the CCCs, or a private postsecondary educational institution or independent institution of higher education that receives state financial assistance or state student financial aid.
- 3) Aligns the policy of the state of California to afford all persons equal rights and opportunities in the postsecondary educational institutions of the state with existing law by specifying that these equal rights and opportunities are regardless of specified characteristics, including ancestry, national origin, medical condition, marital status, familial status, citizenship, and primary language.
- 4) Defines “pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions” as including all of the following:
  - a) Pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or lactation.
  - b) Medical conditions related to pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or lactation.
  - c) Recovery from pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, lactation, or related medical conditions.
- 5) Specifies that “sex” includes, but is not limited to, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions.
- 6) Requires that a postsecondary educational institution not discriminate against a student or applicant based on the actual or potential familial status or marital status of the student or applicant, or based on the student’s or applicant’s pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions.
- 7) Specifies that a postsecondary educational institution does not commit discrimination if it permits a student, based on pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions, to voluntarily participate in a separate portion of an educational program or activity, if the postsecondary educational institution ensures that the separate portion is comparable to the educational program or activity offered to students who are not pregnant or do not have pregnancy-related conditions.
- 8) Prohibits a postsecondary educational institution from requiring a student, as opposed to a *graduate* student, based on the student’s pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition: a) to take a leave of absence or withdraw from an educational program or activity or an extracurricular program or activity, or b) to limit their program.

- 9) Require a postsecondary educational institution to provide reasonable accommodations to an institution's program for a student experiencing pregnancy or a pregnancy-related condition to ensure the student's equal access to the institution's educational programs and activities.
- 10) Requires that reasonable accommodations be provided in consultation with the student and meet the individual needs of the student, and requires that the specified designated employee(s) discuss with the student the reasonable accommodations that the postsecondary educational institution is prepared to provide to address the student's individual needs.
- 11) Permits that the type of accommodations that a postsecondary educational institution provides may include, but are not limited to, the following: a) breaks during class to express breast milk, breast feed, or attend to health needs associated with pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions, b) changes in schedule or course sequences, c) time extensions for coursework and rescheduling of tests and examinations, and d) other accommodations for the student's health or safety.
- 12) Specifies that an accommodation that a postsecondary educational institution can demonstrate would fundamentally alter the nature of its education program or activity is not a reasonable accommodation.
- 13) Requires that an academic requirement that a postsecondary educational institution can demonstrate is essential to the academic integrity of a program or course being pursued by the student, or any directly related licensing requirement, be completed by the student and not be regarded as discrimination, as specified.
- 14) Allows that a student may voluntarily accept or reject any reasonable accommodation offered, as specified.
- 15) Extends academic protections for undergraduate students who are taking a leave of absence due to being pregnant or experiencing pregnancy-related conditions.
- 16) Requires a postsecondary educational institution to designate at least one employee of the institution to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities, as specified; states that the employee may be the same individual as the institution's federal Title IX coordinator; and requires that the employee(s) have adequate training on what constitutes discrimination based on the student's pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions and the policies in place, as specified, to maintain equal access for a student experiencing pregnancy or a pregnancy-related condition.
- 17) Requires a postsecondary educational institution to require employees who are obligated to report pursuant to the institution's nondiscrimination policy, upon being directly informed by a student of the student's pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition, to do both of the following:
  - a) Inform the student of their right to receive reasonable accommodations to maintain access to the educational program.

- b) Provide the student with the contact information for the specified designated employee(s) by the postsecondary educational institution.
- 18) Requires the Board of Governors (BOG) of the CCCs, by July 1, 2027, to adopt regulations for a systemwide policy that include specified requirements and best practices for implementing the requirements, and requires the specified regulations, by September 1, 2027, be adopted by the governing board of each community college district (CCD) and serve as the specified required written policy for the CCD.
  - 19) Permits a postsecondary educational institution to seek guidance, as needed, from the Pregnant Scholar at the Center for WorkLife Law, UC College of the Law, San Francisco.

## STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “AB 1784 updates the California Equity in 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) ***Recent changes to federal Title IX regulations.*** In January 2025, a federal judge issued a nationwide order invalidating the Biden Administration’s 2024 Title IX regulations. According to the National Women’s Law Center, these 2024 Title IX regulations “had strengthened regulatory protections for students against sex-based harassment, anti-LGBTQI+ discrimination, and discrimination based on pregnancy or related conditions.” The judge’s order put the 2020 Title IX regulations back into effect.
- 3) ***Existing state and federal protections for certain students who are pregnant or have pregnancy-related conditions.*** Existing state law provides some protections for students who are pregnant or have pregnancy-related conditions. AB 2350 (Bonilla, Chapter 637, Statutes of 2014) prohibits postsecondary educational institutions from requiring a graduate student to take a leave of absence, withdraw from a graduate program, or limit their studies due to pregnancy or pregnancy-related issues. The protections provided in AB 2350 are specific to *graduate students*. Specifically, the language requires postsecondary educational institutions to reasonably accommodate pregnant graduate students, including requiring institutions to excuse absences that are medically necessary, and allows academic protections for graduate students taking a leave of absence. AB 2350 also extends a limited version of academic protections for graduate students who are not the birth parent but are taking a leave of absence due to the birth of their child.

In addition, AB 2785 (Rubio, Chapter 947, Statutes of 2018) requires the CCCs and the CSU, and encourages a satellite campus of the CCCs or CSU, and encourages the UC, to provide reasonable accommodations on their respective campuses for a lactating student to express breast milk, breastfeed an infant child, or address other needs related to breastfeeding.

When the aforementioned 2020 Title IX regulations were finalized, the new regulations provided protections for all pregnant undergraduate and graduate students, according to the Assembly Higher Education Committee's analysis on AB 1784 on April 7, 2026.

- 4) ***This bill intends to create parity between undergraduate students and graduate students who are pregnant or experiencing pregnancy-related conditions.*** This bill expands existing law by providing to undergraduate students state-level protections currently allowed for graduate students who are pregnant or experiencing pregnancy-related conditions. Pregnancy-related conditions include childbirth, termination of pregnancy, lactation, or related medical conditions. In addition, this bill provides greater specificity on reasonable accommodations, including the process for which reasonable accommodations are discussed with a student, as well as a list of potential accommodations. The reasonable accommodations are not intended to be prescriptive and to help students with their individual needs.

Finally, this bill clarifies that a reasonable accommodation cannot fundamentally alter the nature of its education program or activity. If a postsecondary educational institution can demonstrate that an academic requirement is a directly related licensing requirement or essential to the academic integrity of a program or course being pursued, it would not be considered discrimination as defined by this bill. For example, if a licensing requirement for a program requires a student has 100 hours of a certain experience within a year, the institution may accommodate extending the time it takes to reach that threshold, but the student is still required to complete all 100 hours.

- 5) ***Author's amendments to be taken as committee amendments.*** To provide additional time for the postsecondary educational institutions to implement this legislation, and to align the requirements with the 2027-28 academic year, *the author suggests amending the bill, and committee staff concurs, to:*
- *Delay the implementation of the provisions of this bill—except for the requirement that the BOG adopt regulations for a systemwide policy on the requirements of this bill—from January 1, 2027 to September 1, 2027.*
- 6) ***Related and Prior Legislation.***

AB 2785 (Rubio, Chapter 947, Statutes of 2018) requires the CCCs and the CSU, and encourages a satellite campus of the CCCs or CSU, and encourages the UC, to provide reasonable accommodations on their respective campuses for a lactating student to express breast milk, breastfeed an infant child, or address other needs related to breastfeeding.

AB 2350 (Bonilla, Chapter 637, Statutes of 2014) prohibits postsecondary education institutions from requiring a graduate student to take a leave of absence, withdraw from a graduate program, or limit his/her studies due to pregnancy or pregnancy-related issues.

**SUPPORT**

American Association of University Women of California  
California Catholic Conference  
California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls  
Early Edge California  
EdTrust-West  
Reproductive Freedom for All

**OPPOSITION**

None received

**-- END --**