
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 1784 (Pellerin) - Postsecondary education: nondiscrimination: pregnancy or pregnancy-related issues

Version: July 2, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 3, 2026

Policy Vote: ED. 7 - 0, JUD. 13 - 0

Mandate: Yes

Consultant: Lenin Del Castillo

Bill Summary: This bill, commencing on September 1, 2027, expands academic protections related to leave of absence policies to undergraduate students experiencing pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions and by requiring reasonable accommodations.

Fiscal Impact:

- The Chancellor's office estimates that this bill could result in one-time Proposition 98 General Fund costs of between \$1.1 million and \$2.1 million for the California Community Colleges (CCC) to develop and update written policies on pregnancy discrimination and related protections, provide notices of student rights and coordinator contact information, conduct website updates, and provide student communications. The Chancellor's Office estimates additional one-time costs of between \$500,000 and \$1.6 million to designate and train a coordinator to oversee compliance, depending on whether these duties are absorbed by existing Title IX staff or require partial reassignment. Further, there could be ongoing Proposition 98 General Fund costs in the low millions of dollars each year for community colleges to provide reasonable accommodations. The exact costs will depend on several factors, including the number of students requesting accommodations, the scope of the accommodations, and faculty workload or compensation impacts where course adjustments are necessary.
- The Chancellor's Office estimates one-time General Fund costs of \$25,000 to \$65,000 to update regulations regarding pregnancy discrimination policies.
- The costs to the University of California and California State University are expected to be minor and absorbable.

Background: Existing law prohibits 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.

Existing law 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.

Existing law 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.

Existing law 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.

Existing law 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.

Existing law 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)

Existing law requires that each postsecondary educational institution have a written policy for graduate students on pregnancy discrimination and procedures for addressing pregnancy discrimination complaints, under federal or state law, and 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.

Proposed Law: Commencing on September 1, 2027, this bill 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. It 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.

This bill 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 to take a leave of absence or withdraw from an educational program or activity or an extracurricular program or activity, or to limit their program.

This bill requires 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. It 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 discuss with the student the reasonable accommodations that the postsecondary educational institution is prepared to provide to address the student's individual needs.

This bill permits that the type of accommodations that a postsecondary educational institution provides may include, but are not limited to, the following: breaks during class to express breast milk, breast feed, or attend to health needs associated with pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions; changes in schedule or course sequences; time extensions for coursework and rescheduling of tests and examinations; and other accommodations for the student's health or safety. It 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.

This bill 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.

This bill extends academic protections for undergraduate students who are taking a leave of absence due to being pregnant or experiencing pregnancy-related conditions.

This bill 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 has 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.

This bill 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: inform the student of their right to receive reasonable accommodations to maintain access to the educational program and provide the student with the contact information for the specified designated employee(s) by the postsecondary educational institution.

This bill requires the Board of Governors 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 and serve as the specified required written policy.

Related Legislation: 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.

Staff Comments: Existing law provides protections for students who are pregnant or have pregnancy-related conditions by prohibiting 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. These protections are specific to graduate students. This bill seeks to create parity between undergraduate students and graduate students who are pregnant or experiencing pregnancy-related conditions. Specifically, this bill expands existing law by providing undergraduate students with state-level protections currently provided to graduate students who are pregnant or experiencing pregnancy-related conditions. Pregnancy-related conditions include childbirth, termination of pregnancy, lactation, or related medical conditions. This bill also 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. This bill further clarifies that a reasonable accommodation cannot fundamentally alter the nature of its education program or activity.

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