

THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 1784
Author: Pellerin (D), et al.
Amended: 8/13/26 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE: 7-0, 6/17/26

AYES: Pérez, Ochoa Bogh, Cabaldon, Choi, Cortese, Gonzalez, Reyes

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE: 13-0, 6/30/26

AYES: Umberg, Niello, Allen, Ashby, Caballero, Durazo, Laird, Reyes, Stern,
Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/13/26

AYES: Cervantes, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 74-0, 5/21/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Postsecondary education: nondiscrimination: pregnancy or
pregnancy-related issues

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill, effective September 1, 2027, 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.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

1) Requires the following apply to postsecondary educational institutions:

- 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)

This bill, effective September 1, 2027:

- 1) 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.
- 2) 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.
- 3) 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.

- 4) 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.
- 5) 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.
- 6) 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.
- 7) 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.
- 8) 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.
- 9) 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.
- 10) Allows that a student may voluntarily accept or reject any reasonable accommodation offered, as specified.

- 11) Extends academic protections for undergraduate students who are taking a leave of absence due to being pregnant or experiencing pregnancy-related conditions.
- 12) 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.
- 13) 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.
- 14) States that the provisions of this section do not waive competency, clinical, laboratory, or other graduation or licensure requirements established by a postsecondary educational institution, accrediting agency, or governmental licensing authority, and does not supersede federal student aid regulations.
- 15) 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.

This bill, effective July 1, 2027:

- 16) 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.

Comments

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.”

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 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.

This bill intends to create parity between undergraduate students and graduate students who are pregnant or experiencing pregnancy-related conditions. This bill, effective September 1, 2027, 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. 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. 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 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 certain experience within a year, the institution may extend the time it takes to reach that threshold, but the student is still required to complete all 100 hours.

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

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) 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 CCCs 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 CCCCCO 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 CCCCCO estimates one-time General Fund costs of \$25,000 to \$65,000 to update regulations regarding pregnancy discrimination policies.
- The costs to the UC and CSU are expected to be minor and absorbable.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/14/26)

American Association of University Women of California
 California Catholic Conference
 California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls
 Center for WorkLife Law at the UC College of the Law, San Francisco
 Church State Council
 Early Edge California
 EdTrust-West
 Reproductive Freedom for All

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/14/26)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 74-0, 5/21/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Arambula, Chen, Garcia, Lackey, Ramos, Celeste Rodriguez

Prepared by: Michelle Nguyen / ED. / (916) 651-4105
 8/17/26 10:42:51

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