

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 1784 (Pellerin)

As Amended August 13, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Expands, as of September 1, 2027, 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 for all pregnant students and students experiencing pregnancy related conditions.

Senate Amendments

- 1) Delays implementation of the reasonable accommodations and the expansion of protections to undergraduate students for all colleges and universities until September 1, 2027.
- 2) Clarifies that nothing in the measure will require a postsecondary education institution to waive competency, clinical, laboratory, or other graduation or licensure requirements established by a postsecondary education institution, accrediting agency or government licensing authority.
- 3) Stipulates that provisions of the measure do not supersede compliance with federal aid regulations.
- 4) Makes technical and conforming changes to the measure to comply with the above amendments.

COMMENTS

Need for the measure. In February 2026, *the Journal of Sex Research*, published an article entitled "Title IX and Sexual Violence in Higher Education: A Mapping Review and Assessment of Policy Implementation and Effectiveness." The peer-reviewed article found "infrequencies in the provision of accommodations and supportive measures" even when a sexual harassment complaint is filed. An article, "What is Academe's Problem With Pregnancy?," highlighted the need for the measure as:

"Title IX and the Americans with Disabilities Act require institutions of higher education to give pregnant students accommodations just as they would any disabled student, especially if the institution is providing these services to students with other temporary medical conditions. If a pregnant student chooses to take a leave, when they return, they must be reinstated to their status at the time they left and allowed to resume their studies without penalty. I've also learned, from interviewing close to 100 pregnant academics, that illegal actions that violate these protections happen all the time. As Joan C. Williams and Jessica Lee write, 'We hear over and over about women are penalized for their absence or forced to reapply to their programs as if they had never been accepted.' Pregnant academics 'who do stay in school often face an uphill climb in a hostile environment.'"

Since 2018, there have been two cases were settled by the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education in which a college and a university denied accommodations to a

student and therefore, potentially violated Title IX. In September 2021, College of the Canyons entered into a resolution with the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) after a student alleged the campus had violated Title IX because the pregnant student alleged she was denied the ability to make up course work missed due to labor and delivery. At the time of the allegation and resolution, Title IX included specified protections for pregnant students.

In 2018, OCR entered into a resolution with CSU East Bay, due to an allegation that a pregnant student had been discriminated against when the university failed to provide academic adjustments to ensure she could participate in the education program during her absences and failed to allow her to return to the same academic status. The resolution between the CSU East Bay and OCR included reimbursing the student for the cost of tuition and campus fees and removing the course from her transcript. The student was a graduate student in a post-graduate certificate program at CSU East Bay.

In both cases, additional clarity on the type of leave of absences, program modifications, and policies upon return to campus would have helped the institutions avoid potential violations of Title IX and allegations of discrimination. The measure seeks to provide such clarity for postsecondary education institutions by expanding the existing leave protections to undergraduate students and by defining reasonable accommodations or modifications, a college or university should provide in order to avoid discrimination claims.

According to the Author

"California has long been a leader in ensuring educational equity for our students. Higher education is one of the most powerful factors for upward economic and social mobility, and access for our pregnant, postpartum, and pregnancy-impacted students must be preserved. However, not all pregnant students experience support in balancing their academics during their pregnancy or when postpartum. In 2021, the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights found that the College of the Canyons had likely violated Title IX by not allowing a student to make up a quiz she missed while she was giving birth. For a state that has done so much for reproductive care, this is not acceptable."

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."

Arguments in Support

As explained by the American Association of University Women of California, "pregnant and parenting students should be afforded every opportunity to pursue their academic goals and be protected from any bias or discrimination based on the student's pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions. AB 1784 provides certainty for these students by prohibiting a college from requiring an undergraduate or graduate student to take a leave of absence or withdraw from an undergraduate or graduate program because of their pregnancy, or otherwise limit the student's studies, because the student is pregnant or experiencing pregnancy-related conditions. While students may request accommodations for bonding with a newborn or adopted infant or child,

primary caregivers, who are largely women, are most susceptible to unjust conditions. The lack of accommodation, including medically necessary leave, access to participation in academic work during and post-pregnancy and accommodating a student's appropriate return rights to their academic standing, may ultimately drive them to withdraw from their studies and forgo their higher education goals."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Committee on Appropriations:

- 1) 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.
- 2) The Chancellor's Office estimates one-time General Fund costs of \$25,000 to \$65,000 to update regulations regarding pregnancy discrimination policies.
- 3) The costs to the University of California and California State University are expected to be minor and absorbable.

VOTES:

ASM HIGHER EDUCATION: 10-0-0

YES: Fong, DeMaio, Boerner, Jeff Gonzalez, Jackson, Irwin, Patel, Bennett, Sharp-Collins, Tangipa

ASM JUDICIARY: 12-0-0

YES: Kalra, Macedo, Bauer-Kahan, Bryan, Connolly, Dixon, Harabedian, Pacheco, Papan, Sanchez, Stefani, Zbur

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Aguiar-Curry, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 74-0-6

YES: 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

ABS, ABST OR NV: Arambula, Chen, Garcia, Lackey, Ramos, Celeste Rodriguez

SENATE FLOOR: 38-0-2

YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Blakespear, Limón

UPDATED

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