

THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 2115
Author: Ramos (D), et al.
Amended: 8/18/26 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE: 11-0, 6/16/26

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

NO VOTE RECORDED: Ashby, Weber Pierson

SENATE GOVERNMENTAL ORG. COMMITTEE: 14-0, 6/23/26

AYES: Rubio, Valladares, Archuleta, Ashby, Blakespear, Cervantes, Dahle,
Hurtado, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Richardson, Smallwood-Cuevas, Wahab, Weber
Pierson

NO VOTE RECORDED: Alvarado-Gil

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 78-0, 5/26/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: California Native Americans: formal apology

SOURCE: Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians

DIGEST: This bill 1) states that the State of California recognizes, accepts responsibility, apologizes, and asks forgiveness for the harms and atrocities committed by the State and its representatives, directly or by sanctioning private actors, against California Native Americans; and 2) requires a plaque memorializing the apology to be installed and maintained publicly and conspicuously in the State Capitol Building.

Senate Floor Amendments of 8/18/26 rename the measure the “Rowena Mae Ramos Act,” make findings and declarations relating to the measure’s eponym, and require the plaque commemorating the apology to bear the name of the measure.

ANALYSIS:

Existing federal law, in the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2010, recognized that “there have been years of official depredations, ill-conceived policies, and the breaking of covenants by the Federal Government regarding Indian tribes” and apologizes on behalf of the people of the United States to all Native Peoples for the many instances of violence, maltreatment, and neglect inflicted on Native Peoples by citizens of the United States. (Pub. L. No. 111-118, § 8113, 123 Stat. 3409, 3453.)

Existing state law:

- 1) Makes legislative findings and declarations relating to California’s perpetration of gross human rights violations and crimes against humanity on African slaves and their descendants, and states that California recognizes, accepts responsibility, apologizes, and asks forgiveness for those harms. (Government (Gov.) Code, §§ 8301.1, 8301.2.)
- 2) Requires a plaque memorializing the apology in 1) to be installed and maintained publicly and conspicuously in the State Capitol Building. (Gov. Code, § 8301.3.)
- 3) Requires the Secretary of State to submit a final copy of the formal apology in 1) to the State Archives, as specified. (Gov. Code, § 8301.4.)
- 4) Through Executive Order, states that the State of California does all of the following:
 - a) Recognizes that the State historically sanctioned over a century of depredations and prejudicial policies against California Native Americans.
 - b) Commends and honors California Native Americans for persisting, carrying on cultural and linguistic traditions, and stewarding and protecting this land that we now share.
 - c) Apologizes on behalf of the citizens of the State of California to all California Native Americans for the many instances of violence, maltreatment, and neglect California inflicted on tribes. (Governor’s Exec. Order No. N-15-19 (Jun. 18, 2019).)
- 5) Requires, through Executive Order, the Governor’s Tribal Advisor to establish the Truth and Healing Council to bear witness to, record, examine existing documentation of, and receive California Native American narratives regarding

the historical relationship between the State of California and California Native Americans in order to clarify the historical record of this relationship in the spirit of truth and healing. (Governor's Exec. Order No. N-15-19 (Jun. 18, 2019).)

This bill:

- 1) Establishes the Rowena Mae Ramos Act.
- 2) Makes findings and declarations about the United States and California's history of policies, and complicity in private acts, that harmed and encouraged violence against California Native Americans, removed California Native Americans from their lands, denied California Native Americans their civil rights, separated California Native American children from their families and kept them from their culture, and stole tribal resources.
- 3) Finds and declares the following:
 - a) Rowena Mae Ramos was a beloved elder of the Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation, remembered for a life grounded in cultural pride, generosity, and service. Deeply connected to her heritage, she was a familiar presence at community gatherings across the region, bird dancing and singing the songs passed down through her family, and carrying this cultural knowledge forward with enduring love and dignity. Through her teachings and stories, she passed down the history of her people, ensuring that future generations would remain rooted in their identity and traditions.
 - b) Despite the many wrongdoings committed by the Legislature and other institutions in the State, California Native Americans have survived. Their survival stands as a testament to their resilience and their spirit of resistance and defiance against those who wished them harm.
 - c) In 2019, Governor Gavin Newsom issued an apology to California Native Americans through Executive Order No. N-15-19, which also established the California Truth and Healing Council.
 - d) The Legislature and California Native Americans have never formally examined or documented their own relationship for the express purpose of acknowledging and accounting for the historical wrongs committed through the State's actions and inaction.
 - e) The Legislature has never formally apologized to California Native Americans for its historical wrongdoing.

- f) The Legislature has never formally expressed a commitment to working with California Native American Tribes to build a closer relationship with their communities and governments to rectify the historical wrongdoing.
- 4) Provides all of the following:
- a) The State of California recognizes and accepts responsibility for all of the harms and atrocities committed by its representatives who promoted, permitted, facilitated, and enforced policies of violence against California Native Americans, which has left an enduring legacy of trauma and has led to the destruction of important cultural and spiritual sites, and recognizes the irreparable harms it has caused to its tribal communities.
 - b) The Legislature commends and honors California Native Americans for their resilience and continued work to maintain their cultural and linguistic traditions, which this State proudly considers part of its history and cultural identity.
 - c) The Legislature apologizes for perpetuating the harms experienced by California Native Americans as a result of policies enacted, sanctioned, or tolerated by this body throughout the State's history. These harms, which include acts of violence, forced displacement, cultural suppression, land theft, family separation, and the deliberate erosion of tribal sovereignty, inflicted generational trauma and contributed to the systematic marginalization of Native peoples across California.
 - d) The Legislature acknowledges that these were not isolated incidents but part of a sustained pattern of state-supported actions and inactions that denied California Native Americans their inherent rights, dignity, and humanity. The Legislature further recognizes that the consequences of these injustices continue to affect tribal communities today, contributing to disparities in health, education, land access, cultural preservation, and economic opportunity.
 - e) The Legislature humbly asks for forgiveness from those affected by past atrocities, whether committed deliberately or through negligence, and affirms its responsibility to confront and end ongoing injustices that stem from these historical wrongs.
- 5) Requires a plaque memorializing the apology in 4), including the findings and declarations in 2)-4) and the name of the measure, to be installed and maintained publicly and conspicuously in the State Capitol Building.

- 6) Requires the Department of General Services (DGS), in consultation with the Joint Rules Committee, to do all of the following:
 - a) Plan and install the plaque to be put in the State Capitol Building pursuant to 5).
 - b) Ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other safety concerns.
 - c) Develop a maintenance agreement for the long-term maintenance of the plaque.
 - d) Establish a schedule for the design, construction, and dedication of the plaque, implement procedures to solicit designs for the plaque, devise a selection process for the choice of design, and establish a program for the dedication of the plaque.
- 7) Requires the Joint Rules Committee to approve the design and any other aspect of the plaque, and the DGS to provide for continuous maintenance and upkeep of the fixture.
- 8) Requires the Secretary of State to submit a final copy of the formal apology in 4) to the State Archives, where it shall be available for viewing by the general public in perpetuity.
 - a) The Legislature shall prepare the formal apology.
 - b) The apology shall bear the Great Seal of the State.
 - c) The Speaker of the Assembly, President Pro Tem of the Senate, Governor, and Chief Justice of California are requested to sign the apology.
- 9) Permits the DGS and Joint Rules Committee, notwithstanding any other provision of law, to receive moneys from any federal, state, or local grant, or from any private donation or grant, for the purposes of this bill, and that any such funds received are continuously appropriated to the DGS and Joint Rules Committee, without regard to fiscal years, for the purpose of this bill.

Comments

In 2019, Governor Gavin Newsom signed an executive order that apologized on behalf of the citizens of the State of California to all California Native Americans for the many instances of violence, maltreatment, and neglect California inflicted on tribes. The executive order recognized that the State of California and

California Native Americans have never jointly formally examined or documented their relationship for the express purpose of acknowledging and accounting for the State's historical wrongs committed against California Native Americans. To date, however, the Legislature has not apologized for its role in committing, or sanctioning, these historical wrongs.

This bill extends a long-overdue apology to California Native Americans on behalf of the California Legislature for its responsibility for the state's denial of rights to, and violence against, California Native Americans. The bill further provides that the Legislature accepts responsibility for its role in denying California Native Americans their inherent rights, dignity, and sovereignty, asks for forgiveness, and affirms the Legislature's responsibility to confront and end ongoing injustices that stem from these historical wrongs. Additionally, this bill requires a plaque commemorating the apology to be established and placed in the State Capitol Building.

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

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/18/26)

Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians (source)
CFT – A Union of Educators & Classified Professionals, AFT, AFL-CIO
East Bay Regional Park District
Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake
Morongo Band of Mission Indians
Society for California Archaeology
Wilton Rancheria
Yurok Tribe

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/18/26)

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: According to the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians:

California is home to the largest Native American population in the United States, with more than 100 Native Nations residing within its border, each nation with its own distinct culture, spiritual traditions, and histories. These communities have endured centuries of violence sanctioned by both state and federal policies, violence that has continued to impact their communities to this day.

For tribes like the Chumash, whose ancestral homelands span the Central Coast, these policies were not abstract or distant. They translated into dispossession from traditional lands, the erosion of cultural practices, and generations of trauma that continue to affect our people today. These harms were the direct result of state-sanctioned policies adopted and maintained during California's early history.

AB 2115 builds on the work initiated by Governor Newsom's 2019 executive order. It ensures that the Legislature formally acknowledges its role in these historic wrongs and affirms the State's commitment to true government-to-government relationships with tribal nations. This acknowledgment provides a necessary foundation for rebuilding trust and advancing meaningful reconciliation.

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 78-0, 5/26/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, 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: Muratsuchi, Celeste Rodriguez

Prepared by: Allison Whitt Meredith / JUD. / (916) 651-4113
8/24/26 13:38:02

**** END ****