

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 2483 (Elhawary)

As Amended June 24, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to implement a standardized process to ensure any individual who successfully completes training in a CAL FIRE firefighting training camp while incarcerated receives official written certification before their release from prison.

Senate Amendments

- 1) Strike the requirement for CAL FIRE to award hiring preference to a specified qualified formerly incarcerated individual that applies for a Forestry Technician Classification position.
- 2) Strike the authorization for CAL FIRE to provide hiring preference for specified classifications to qualified formerly incarcerated individuals.

COMMENTS

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), in cooperation with CAL FIRE and the Los Angeles County Fire Department, jointly operates 35 conservation camps, commonly referred to as fire camps, across 25 counties. All camps are minimum-security facilities, staffed with correctional staff, and typically located within a few miles of a small population center. Once volunteers pass the physical fitness test, they must complete CAL FIRE's firefighter training program, which consists of four days of classroom training and four days of field training, taught by CAL FIRE staff.

An inmate must volunteer for the fire camp program; no inmate is involuntarily assigned to work in a fire camp. Volunteers must have "minimum custody" status, or the lowest classification for inmates based on their sustained good behavior in prison, their conforming to rules within the prison and participation in rehabilitative programming. Some conviction offenses automatically make an inmate ineligible for conservation camp assignment, even if they have minimum custody status. Those convictions include sexual offenses, arson, and any history of escape with force or violence.

CAL FIRE generates a certificate of completion when an incarcerated individual completes the required hand crew training, and CDCR maintains custody of the document until the individual paroled. The certificate can be used by formerly incarcerated individuals to apply for Firefighter I positions at CAL FIRE.

AB 2483 require CAL FIRE to implement a standardized process to ensure that all eligible individuals in the Conservation Camp program receive official written certification reflective of the training they've received, and award hiring preference under Fire Fighter I Category Placement 2 to qualified formerly incarcerated individuals.

According to the Author

By requiring CAL FIRE and CDCR to issue formal certification, AB 2483 invests in rehabilitation, reduces recidivism, strengthens our firefighting workforce, and promotes equity by ensuring that those most impacted by the justice system have the opportunity to serve their communities with dignity.

Arguments in Support

The Ella Baker Center for Human Rights writes AB 2483 recognizes the heroism, bravery, sacrifice, and commitment of incarcerated handcrews by creating gainful employment opportunities. Importantly, the bill would require CAL FIRE to ensure a pathway to employment for committed and qualified fire camp participants who wish to continue to pursue a career in firefighting after being released from prison.

Arguments in Opposition

None on file

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- 1) CAL FIRE estimates costs of \$670,000 in the first year and about \$568,000 annually thereafter (General Fund) to document, process, track, and create certifications for incarcerated individuals who successfully complete Conservation Camp firefighter training, and to acquire and maintain specialized equipment including electronic tablets.
- 2) CDCR anticipates minor and absorbable workload costs as a result of this bill (General Fund), with the majority of workload and associated fiscal impacts falling to CAL FIRE. To the extent CDCR would be required to provide additional training or licensing to meet the minimum requirements for the Fire Fighter 1 or Forestry Technician classifications, CDCR anticipates additional associated costs of an unknown amount.

VOTES:**ASM NATURAL RESOURCES: 14-0-0**

YES: Bryan, Ellis, Alanis, Connolly, Garcia, Haney, Hoover, Kalra, Macedo, Muratsuchi, Pellerin, Schultz, Wicks, Zbur

ASM PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT AND RETIREMENT: 7-0-0

YES: McKinnor, Lackey, Alanis, Boerner, Garcia, Nguyen, Michelle Rodriguez

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: 77-0-3

YES: 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, 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: Muratsuchi, Ramos, Celeste Rodriguez

UPDATED

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