

Date of Hearing: April 8, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

Blanca Rubio, Chair

AB 2644 (Blanca Rubio) – As Introduced February 20, 2026

SUBJECT: Gambling Control Act

SUMMARY: This bill would require the Governor to notify the Legislature when the Governor removes a member of the California Gambling Control Commission (CGCC) for cause.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires the Governor to notify the Legislature of the removal of any member of the CGCC, as specified.
- 2) Makes technical, non-substantive, and conforming changes to the Gambling Control Act (Act).

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Provides for the licensure and regulation of various legalized gambling activities and establishments by the CGCC and the investigation and enforcement of those activities and establishments by the Department of Justice (DOJ or Bureau of Gambling Control).
- 2) Provides that the CGCC is composed of five members who are appointed by the Governor, for a term of four years, subject to confirmation by the Senate. Requires each member of the CGCC to be a citizen of the United States and a resident of this state
- 3) Requires one member of the CGCC to be a certified public accountant or a person with experience in banking or finance, one member to be an attorney and a member of the State Bar or California with regulatory law experience, one member to have a background in law enforcement and criminal investigation, and one member to have a background in business with at least five years of business experience or five years of governmental experience, and one member be from the public.
- 4) Requires the Governor to fill any vacancies on the CGCC, subject to confirmation by the Senate, within 60 days of the date of the vacancy. Provides that a person is ineligible for appointment if, within two years prior to appointment, the person was employed by, retained by, or derived substantial income from, a gambling establishment.
- 5) Provides that no more than three of the five members of the CGCC shall be members of the same political party. Prohibits a member of the CGCC from engaging in any other business, vocation, or employment.
- 6) Authorizes the Governor to remove a member of the CGCC for incompetence, neglect of duty, or corruption upon first giving the member a copy of the charges and an opportunity to be heard.

FISCAL EFFECT: This bill is keyed fiscal by Legislative Counsel.

COMMENTS:

Purpose of the bill. According to the author's office, "The bill aims to ensure the prompt enforcement of gambling laws by addressing vacancies and enabling the CGCC to operate efficiently. When seats are unfilled, even a single absence or recusal can hinder decision-making, leaving the industry without effective oversight and causing delays. The bill seeks to strengthen enforcement, improve dispute resolution, and expedite licensing."

Background.

Prior to 1998, California's gambling industry was essentially unregulated. In 1984, the Legislature enacted the "Gaming Registration Act," which required the Attorney General's office to provide uniform, minimum regulation of California card rooms. However, the scope of the Attorney General's authority was extremely limited, and funding was inadequate. Recognizing the need for broader oversight of California's gambling industry, the Legislature enacted the "Gambling Control Act" in 1997.

The Act provides CGCC with jurisdiction over the operation of gambling establishments in California. The Act requires every owner, lessee, or employee of a gambling establishment to obtain and maintain a valid state gambling license and assigns CGCC the responsibility of assuring that gambling licenses are not issued to, or held by, unqualified or disqualified persons, or by persons whose operations are conducted in a manner that is harmful to the public health, safety, or welfare.

The Governor appoints the members of the CGCC, subject to confirmation by the Senate, and shall designate one member to serve as chairperson. Vacancies shall be filled within 60 days of the date of the vacancy by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the Senate. The Governor may remove any member of the CGCC for incompetence, neglect of duty, or corruption upon first giving him or her a copy of the charges and an opportunity to be heard.

The Act directs CGCC to issue licenses only to those persons of good character, honesty and integrity, whose prior activities, criminal record, if any; reputation, habits and associations do not pose a threat to the public interest of this state. The Bureau, within DOJ, conducts background and field investigations and enforces the provisions of the Act in this regard. There are approximately 86 cardrooms currently licensed by the CGCC.

The CGCC, pursuant to the Compacts, the Act, the Governor's Executive Order D-31-01 and Governor's Executive Order D-66-03, has various fiduciary, regulatory and administrative responsibilities related to Tribal gaming and the distribution of revenues to eligible Indian Tribes. The State of California has signed and ratified tribal-state Class III gaming compacts that are currently in effect with 66 Tribes. There are currently 65 casinos operated by 62 Tribes. Of the 62 Tribes, 50 have tribal-state compacts and 12 have Secretarial Procedures.

Related legislation. AB 2793 (Governmental Organization) of 2026. This bill would modify existing law to require that one member of the CGCC, among other criteria, to be an attorney with regulatory or gaming law experience. (Assembly Committee on Governmental Organization)

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file

Opposition

None on file

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