

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 2753 (Soria)

As Amended March 19, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Prohibits a person from being a candidate for, or from being elected to, any state or local elective office if the person has ever been required to register as a sex offender pursuant to existing law.

Major Provisions**COMMENTS**

The California Constitution provides that a person convicted of bribery involving an election or appointment cannot hold elected office. It also directs the Legislature to create laws that "exclude persons convicted of bribery, perjury, forgery, malfeasance in office, or other high crimes from office or serving on juries." Although that provision is mandatory, it is not self-executing and requires legislation to give it effect. To effectuate the constitutional prohibitions, various state laws were enacted. AB 2410 (Fuentes), Chapter 160, Statutes of 2012, enacted Elections Code Section 20 which lists various types of felony convictions that prevent a person from being eligible to be elected to state and local office. The disqualifying crimes are ones that are sometimes referred to as "public trust" crimes – that is, illegal acts that involve the breach of the ethical obligation that a public servant is expected to exercise their public responsibilities in a manner that prioritizes the public interest over private gain. Elections Code Section 20 is, to some extent, an implementing statute for Article VII, Section 8 of the California Constitution.

This bill expands the existing limitations on candidate eligibility and prohibits a person who has ever been required to register as a sex offender from being eligible to be elected to any state or local elective office. The author contends those seeking higher office must be held to a higher standard and that this bill will reaffirm public's trust in their democracy by preventing those guilty of these heinous crimes from holding office.

If this bill is signed into law, it could set a precedent for extending similar restrictions to individuals convicted of other crimes, thereby narrowing eligibility for public office. For instance, others may contend that a conviction for a serious crime such as murder warrants disqualification from public office. Once the list of disqualifying offenses is expanded to include crimes that do not involve a breach of a public servant's ethical obligations when exercising public responsibilities, it is less clear what standard should be used for determining which types of criminal convictions should disqualify a person from holding elective office.

Under Penal Code Section 290, also known as the Sex Offender Registration Act, the sex offender registration is a tier-based schema. Generally, there are three tiers of registration for adult registrants for periods of 10 years, 20 years, and life, and two tiers for registration for juvenile registrants for periods of 5 years and 10 years.

Under this bill, a person who has ever been required to registered as a sex offender is disqualified for life from public office even though they may not have been required to be registered as a sex offender for life.

Please see the policy committee analysis for a full discussion of this bill.

According to the Author

"In order to ensure public trust in California's Democratic institutions, California law prohibits those with certain criminal convictions from holding elected office. Despite this, current law has no restriction on registered sex offenders from attempting to attain elected positions. To ensure the safety of the public, AB 2753 would include registered sex offenders among those prohibited from running for or holding local or state elected office due to a past conviction. This will reaffirm the public's trust in their democracy by preventing those guilty of these heinous crimes from holding higher office."

Arguments in Support

In support of this bill, the Fresno City Council, writes: "On March 19, 2026, the Fresno City Council unanimously adopted Resolution No. 2026-41 in support of this legislation...Currently, there is no prohibition preventing individuals required to register as sex offenders from seeking elected office. This undermines public confidence and raises serious concerns about the standards we set for those entrusted with leadership. Public office is built on trust, accountability, and the responsibility to protect the most vulnerable. Those who have committed crimes that violate that trust, particularly against children should not be eligible to serve in positions of public authority.

"AB 2753 establishes a clear, consistent, and necessary standard across California. It aligns with existing expectations placed on individuals in positions of public trust and reinforces the integrity of our democratic institutions."

Arguments in Opposition

None received.

FISCAL COMMENTS

None. This bill is keyed non-fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

VOTES**ASM ELECTIONS: 7-0-1**

YES: Pellerin, Gallagher, Bennett, Berman, Johnson, Solache, Stefani

ABS, ABST OR NV: Elhawary

UPDATED

VERSION: March 19, 2026

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