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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair  
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

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### AB 347 (Kalra) - Pupil instruction: animal dissection

**Version:** March 18, 2025

**Urgency:** No

**Hearing Date:** July 14, 2025

**Policy Vote:** ED. 7 - 0

**Mandate:** No

**Consultant:** Lenin Del Castillo

**Bill Summary:** This bill requires local educational agencies (LEAs) to provide notifications related to the dissection of animals in schools, and also provides that the California Department of Education (CDE) shall develop a template for students to use to opt-out of dissections. Further, this bill makes compliance with the opt-out subject to the Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) process.

#### Fiscal Impact:

- The CDE may incur additional costs to develop the template that teachers may use to provide notice to students and respond to UCP complaints regarding students' rights to refrain from participation in the dissection of animals. However, the CDE indicates that the bill's costs could be absorbed within existing resources.
- By expanding the UCP process to include complaints related to pupil's rights to refrain from participation in an activity involving the dissection of animal, this bill could increase the Proposition 98 General Fund costs associated with the existing UCP mandate. The extent of these costs is unknown and would depend on the number of complaints each year. The UCP mandate has an adopted statewide cost estimate of \$209,613 and a prospective cost of \$34,751 each year.
- This bill could result in additional, unknown Proposition 98 General Fund costs for LEAs to provide additional notifications and alternative assignments for students to complete in place of dissections.

**Background:** Existing law requires each teacher teaching a course that utilizes live or dead animals or animal parts to inform students of their rights to refrain from animal dissection. It also requires that a student's objection to participating in an educational project pursuant to this section be substantiated by a note from his or her parent or guardian.

Existing law requires a student with a moral objection to dissecting or otherwise harming or destroying animals, or any parts thereof, to notify his or her teacher regarding this objection, upon notification by the school of his or her rights. It states that if the student chooses to refrain from participation in an education project involving the harmful or destructive use of animals, and if the teacher believes that an adequate alternative education project is possible, the teacher may work with the student to develop and agree upon an alternate education project for the purpose of providing the student an

alternate avenue for obtaining the knowledge, information, or experience required by the course of study.

Existing law requires that the alternative education project require a comparable time and effort investment by the student, and prohibits it from being more arduous than the original education project as a means of penalizing a student and for students choosing an alternative educational project to pass all examinations of the respective course of study in order to receive credit for that course of study. If such tests require the harmful or destructive use of animals, permits a student to seek alternative tests.

**Proposed Law:** This bill requires each teacher teaching a course that utilizes live or dead animals or animal parts for purposes of dissection, or a public school on behalf of the teacher, to provide written notice to each pupil and the pupil's parent or guardian of the pupil's rights that include all of the following information as part of the written notification:

1. A pupil's right to refrain from participating in an assignment or assessment involving the dissection of animals.
2. The prohibition of impact on a pupil's grades as a means of penalizing the pupil for exercising their right to opt-out.
3. A pupil's right to request any sourcing information provided by the vendor or provider of the animals and information about the chemicals used to preserve animals for dissection to which the student may be exposed.
4. The complaint procedures.

This bill requires CDE to develop a template that a teacher, or a public school on behalf of the teacher, may use to provide written notice to the students and make that template available on its internet website by the start of the 2026-2027 school year.

This bill specifies that the rights and requirements of this bill shall apply to all levels of instruction in all public schools operating programs in kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, including, but not limited to, public schools operated by school districts, COEs, charter schools, or state special schools, to the extent that the public school chooses to offer a course of study that uses live or dead animals or animal parts for purposes of dissection.

This bill encourages public schools to explore using effective alternative methods in lieu of using live or dead animals or animal parts for dissection in a course of study, by July 1, 2028; except in classes and activities that are conducted as part of a program of agricultural education that provide instruction on the care, management, and evaluation of domestic animals.

This bill expands the scope of the UCP process to allow complaints related to pupils' rights to refrain from participation in an assignment or assessment involving the dissection of animals and to choose an alternative assignment or assessment.

**Related Legislation:** AB 2640 (Kalra, 2024) was substantially similar to this bill and held on the Suspense File in this Committee.

AB 1586 (Kalra, 2019) would have prohibited students enrolled in public or private schools from dissecting, or viewing the dissection of, animals in the study of biological sciences. This bill was held in the Assembly Education Committee.

**Staff Comments:** This bill would reinforce pupils' existing right to opt-out of animal dissection projects by requiring, as a part of the written notification to students and parents or guardian of the pupil's, information about pupil's right to refrain from participating in an assessment, education project, or test involving the dissection of animals. According to the author, "the lessons of anatomy are an important scientific teaching in a student's academic career. However, with the advancements in educational technology, alternative methods can still reach the same educational outcome without having to rely on costly animal dissection kits. California law allows students to opt out of animal dissection and request an alternative assignment but they are not made aware of their right and often times feel obligated to participate.

**-- END --**