

THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 395
Author: Gabriel (D), et al.
Amended: 8/19/26 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE: 7-0, 6/25/25

AYES: Pérez, Ochoa Bogh, Cabaldon, Choi, Cortese, Gonzalez, Laird

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE: 13-0, 6/30/26

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

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/13/26

AYES: Cervantes, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0, 6/2/25 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Holidays

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill (1) requires, beginning with the 2027-28 school year, K-12 schools, community college districts, the California State University (CSU), and requests the University of California (UC), to make efforts to avoid scheduling specified events on a date for which the school, college, or university knows that members of the public would be unable to participate or be present due to the ritual observance of a religious, cultural, or ancestral holiday; and (2) requires state agencies, and encourages the legislative bodies of local agencies, to make efforts to avoid conducting specified business on such dates.

Senate Floor Amendments of 8/19/26 require a person who believes that a governing board of a community college, the CSU, the UC, or a state agency has not made good faith, reasonable efforts to implement the provisions of this bill to request that the entity provide in writing the specific basis for the entity's determination that it could not avoid scheduling a specified event that may conflict

with the ritual observance of a religious, cultural, or ancestral holiday, before filing a lawsuit. The amendments also revise part of the definition of an institutional event for specified postsecondary educational institutions by replacing “academic examination days” with “final exam week”.

ANALYSIS: Existing law:

- 1) Title VII of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in employment based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Title VII also requires employers to make reasonable accommodations for employees’ religious beliefs and practices, unless doing so causes an undue hardship on the employers. (United States Code, Title 42, § 2000e et seq.)
- 2) Establishes the state holidays as: every Sunday; January 1; the third Monday in January, known as “Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day”; the date corresponding with the second new moon following the winter solstice, or the third new moon following the winter solstice should an intercalary month intervene, known as “Lunar New Year”; February 12, known as “Lincoln Day”; the third Monday in February; March 31, known as “Cesar Chavez Day”; April 24, known as “Genocide Remembrance Day”; the last Monday in May; June 19, known as “Juneteenth”; July 4; the first Monday in September; September 9, known as “Admission Day”; the fourth Friday in September, known as “Native American Day”; the second Monday in October, known as “Columbus Day”; November 11, known as “Veterans Day”; December 25; Good Friday from 12 noon until 3 p.m.; and, every day appointed by the President or Governor for a public fast, thanksgiving, or holiday. (Government Code (GOV) § 6700)
- 3) Allows a state employee to choose to receive eight hours of holiday credit specifically for observance of a holiday or ceremony of the state employee’s religion, culture, or heritage in lieu of receiving eight hours of personal holiday credit. (GOV § 19853.2)
- 4) Provides that the school year begins on the first day of July and ends on the last day of June. (Education Code (EC) § 37200)
- 5) Requires public K-12 schools to close on specified holidays, including: January 1; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; Lincoln Day; Washington Day; Memorial Day; July 4; Labor Day; Veterans Day; Thanksgiving Day; December 25; all days appointed by the Governor or the President of the United States for a public fast, thanksgiving or holiday; and, any other day designated as a holiday

by the governing board of the school district. (EC § 37220)

- 6) Provides that every community college district is to be under the control of a board of trustees, known as the governing board, which has the authority to establish, maintain, operate, and govern one or more community colleges within its district as specified. Requires the governing board of each community college district to take numerous actions, including to determine the district's academic calendar, including the holidays it will observe. (EC § 70902)
- 7) Establishes the CSU system, made of 23 campuses, and bestows upon the CSU Trustees, through the Board of Trustees, the power, duties, and functions with respect to the management, administration, and control of the CSU system. (EC § 66606 and § 89030 et. seq.)
- 8) Establishes the UC as a public trust to be administered by the Regents and grants the Regents full powers of organization and governance subject only to legislative control as necessary to ensure the security of funds, compliance with terms of its endowments, and the statutory requirements around competitive bidding and contracts, sales of property, and the purchase of materials, goods, and services. (Article IX, § (9) (a) of the California Constitution)

This bill:

K-12 governing boards and bodies

- 1) Requires, beginning with the 2027–28 school year, the governing board of a school district, a county office of education, or the governing body of a charter school, to consider making efforts to avoid scheduling the first day of class and high school graduation, if applicable, on a date for which the governing board or county office of education knows, or has reason to know, that members of the public would be unable to participate or be present due to the ritual observance of a religious, cultural, or ancestral holiday.
- 2) Requires the governing board or county office of education, in considering and making a determination of which dates to avoid, to actively seek input from the affected community and consider any other relevant sources to ensure inclusive public participation.

Community college districts, CSU, and UC

- 3) Requires the governing board of a community college and the CSU, and requests the UC, beginning with the 2027–28 academic year, to make good faith, reasonable efforts when developing academic calendars to avoid calendaring an institutional event on a date for which the institution of higher education knows, or has reason to know, that members of the public would be unable to participate or be present due to the ritual observance of a religious, cultural, or ancestral holiday.
- 4) Defines “institutional event” to mean an event on the academic or institutional calendar for which students are mandated to attend, including, but not limited to, all of the following:
 - a) Student orientation.
 - b) Student housing move-in day.
 - c) Final exam week.
 - d) The beginning or ending of an academic term.
 - e) Commencement ceremonies.
- 5) Requires the governing board of a community college and the CSU, and requests the UC, in considering and making a determination of which dates to avoid, to seek input from the student and faculty organizations on campus prior to the calendaring of institutional events.
- 6) Provides that a person who has suffered harm as a result of a violation of the provisions of this bill may bring a civil action, and requires that the sole remedy available in that action be injunctive relief.
- 7) Requires a person who believes that the institution has not made good faith, reasonable efforts to implement the provisions of this bill to request that the institution provide in writing the specific basis for the institution’s determination that it could not avoid scheduling an institutional event that may conflict with the ritual observance of a religious, cultural, or ancestral holiday, before filing a lawsuit.
- 8) Requires the plaintiff, in order to prevail in an action for the specified injunctive relief, to demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that the violation was

due to bad faith, willful misconduct, or callous disregard on the part of the respondent.

State agencies

- 9) Requires a state agency to make good faith, reasonable efforts to avoid conducting any meeting, conference, or other function on a date for which the state agency knows, or has reason to know, that members of the public would be unable to participate or be present due to the ritual observance of a religious, cultural, or ancestral holiday, including, but not limited to, all of the following:
 - a) Eid al-Adha.
 - b) Eid al-Fitr.
 - c) Feast of the Nativity.
 - d) Maha Shivaratri.
 - e) The first and last two days of Pesach, also known as Passover.
 - f) Rosh Hashanah.
 - g) Yom Kippur.
 - h) Diwali.
 - i) Dussehra.
- 10) Provides that a person who has suffered harm as a result of a violation of the provisions of this bill may bring a civil action, and requires that the sole remedy available in that action be injunctive relief.
- 11) Requires a person who believes that the state agency has not made good faith, reasonable efforts to implement the provisions of this bill to request that the state agency provide in writing the specific basis for the state agency's determination that it could not avoid scheduling a meeting, conference, or other function that may conflict with the ritual observance of a religious, cultural, or ancestral holiday, before filing a lawsuit.

- 12) Requires the plaintiff, in order to prevail in an action for the specified injunctive relief, to demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that the violation was due to bad faith, willful misconduct, or callous disregard on the part of the respondent.

Local agencies

- 13) Encourages a legislative body of a local agency to consider making efforts to avoid conducting any meeting, conference, or other function on a date for which the legislative body knows, or has reason to know, that members of the public would be unable to participate or be present due to the ritual observance of a religious, cultural, or ancestral holiday, including, but not limited to, all of the holidays listed in #9 above.

Comments

Need for the bill. According to the author, “No one should have to choose between practicing their faith and their education. Unfortunately, this has been an ongoing dilemma for minority communities when important meetings and academic milestones are scheduled on significant religious or cultural holidays. AB 395 takes a proactive approach to respecting the diverse traditions of Californians, and furthers the intent and purpose of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by ensuring that state institutions work for all communities.”

K-12 school calendars. School district, charter school, and county office of education academic calendars are established by the local governing board or body. The school calendar is often bargained locally. Current law requires that the school year begins July 1 and ends June 30 of the following year. Current law further requires, for school districts, the school year to be at least 180 days. Public schools are required to close on a number of holidays. Beyond those requirements, school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools have the discretion to adopt calendars that fit the needs of their communities, including when to schedule, for example, the first and last days of school, winter or spring breaks, and events such as graduation ceremonies.

This bill does not require K-12 schools to change their calendars but rather requires them to consider making efforts to avoid scheduling the first day of class and high school graduation on a date that members of the public would be unable to participate or be present due to the ritual observance of a religious, cultural, or

ancestral holiday.

Public postsecondary educational institution calendars. The governing board of each community college district determines the district's academic calendar, including the holidays it will observe. The California Code of Regulations provide that a "college year" begins on the first day of July and ends on the last day of June. The "academic year" must include 175 days of instruction and does not include summer or other intersession terms.

The CSU does not have a systemwide policy for how academic calendars are created for the 23 campuses. According to the Assembly Higher Education Committee's analysis, each campus' President has the authority to create an academic calendar in collaboration with academic faculty, which is reviewed and endorsed by the Chancellor's Office (to ensure each calendar meets the requirements described next). Each academic calendar must have a minimum of 147 instructional days and 170 work days, which must align with the monthly payroll schedule set by the California Department of Finance.

The academic calendar for all UC general campuses is set by the Provost at the UC Office of the President. The campus Chancellors have authority for setting calendars for professional schools and certain professional programs for working adults. UC general campuses are required to have common start dates for all quarters and semesters, 146 instructional days per academic year, and to avoid calendaring residence hall move-in dates on religious holidays during the fall term.

This bill does not require public postsecondary educational institutions to change their calendars but rather requires community college districts and CSU, and requests UC, make good faith, reasonable efforts when developing academic calendars to avoid calendaring an institutional event on a date for which the institution of higher education knows, or has reason to know, that members of the public would be unable to participate or be present due to the ritual observance of a religious, cultural, or ancestral holiday.

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

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- By authorizing a person who has suffered harm as a result of a violation of the bill's provisions to bring a civil action for injunctive relief, this bill could result in additional, unknown cost pressures to the courts to adjudicate these cases (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund). The actual costs will depend on the

number of cases filed and the amount of court time needed to resolve each case. It typically costs about \$1,000 to operate a courtroom for one hour. While the courts are not funded on a workload basis, an increase in workload could result in delayed court services and put pressure on the General Fund to fund additional staff and resources.

- The Chancellor's Office for the CCCs estimates Proposition 98 General Fund costs in the low thousands of dollars for each community college district per year to make the necessary updates to academic calendars and additional state operations costs in the low thousands of dollars to update guidance on academic calendars.
- The UC indicates that any costs resulting from the bill would be minor and absorbable.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/19/26)

30 Years After

Adat Shalom Los Angeles

ADL

Agudath Israel of America

Agudath Israel of California

AJC Los Angeles

AJC Northern California

AJC San Diego

American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees

Armenian National Committee of America - Western Region

Bay Area Center to Counter Antisemitism

Bay Area Jewish Coalition Education & Advocacy

Beverly Hills Synagogue

Board of Rabbis of Southern California

California Catholic Conference

California Charter Schools Association

California Jewish Democrats

California Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

California School Employees Association

CFT - A Union of Educators & Classified Professionals, AFT, AFL-CIO

CHAI Marin

Church State Council

Coalition of Hindus of North America

Contra Costa Jewish Democrats

Democrats for Israel - Los Angeles
Fresno Unified School District
Hadassah
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America
Hillel of San Diego
Holocaust Museum LA
Inland and Desert Hillel
Intercultural Networks Group
JCAN
JCC-Federation of San Luis Obispo
JCRC Bay Area
JCRC Santa Barbara County
JCRC, Jewish Long Beach
Jewish California
Jewish Center for Justice
Jewish Center of Berkeley
Jewish Coalition of Berkeley
Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund
Jewish Community Relations Council, Sacramento Region
Jewish Community Relations Council, Santa Barbara
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Democratic Club of Marin
Jewish Democratic Coalition of the Bay Area
Jewish Family and Children's Services of Long Beach and Orange County
Jewish Family and Children's Services of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties
Jewish Family Service LA
Jewish Family Service of San Diego
Jewish Family Service of the Desert
Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley
Jewish Federation Bay Area
Jewish Federation Los Angeles
Jewish Federation of Greater Santa Barbara
Jewish Federation of Orange County
Jewish Federation of San Diego
Jewish Federation of the Desert
Jewish Federation of the Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys
Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region
Jewish Federation of Ventura County
Jewish Free Loan Association

Jewish Long Beach
Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation
Jewish Public Affairs Committee
Jewish Silicon Valley
Jewish War Veterans, Department of California
JFCS East Bay
JFCS Long Beach and Orange County
JVS SoCal
Muslim Public Affairs Council
National Council of Jewish Women San Francisco
Northern California Jewish Labor Committee
Oakland Jewish Alliance
Palo Alto Jewish Alliance
Progressive Zionists of California
SF Jews in School
Simon Wiesenthal Center
StandWithUs
Student Senate for California Community Colleges
Teach Coalition
Valley Beth Shalom

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/19/26)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0, 6/2/25

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, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

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