
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 449 (Jackson) - Civil Rights Department: antidiscrimination campaigns

Version: June 19, 2025

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: July 14, 2025

Policy Vote: JUD. 11 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Liah Burnley

Bill Summary: Requires the Civil Rights Department (CRD) to, upon appropriation, establish a working group to develop and launch a public campaign to discourage discrimination based on protected characteristics.

Fiscal Impact: To administer this bill, CRD anticipates requesting one position (Staff Services Manager II), \$171,000 in 26-27, and \$168,000 in 27-28 and ongoing. This position would manage the working group required by the bill as well as create and run the public education campaigns, under CRD leadership's direction (absorbable workload). In addition, CRD reports that it would request between \$2.5 million to \$25 million in 26-27 and 27-28 and ongoing for the public education campaigns themselves, depending on the type, size, frequency, and other details of the public education campaigns that the Legislature would like to fund. For example, a public education campaign that runs on TV would be much more expensive than one that is not on TV. This range is based on CRD's experience and the costs of running other statewide public education campaigns in recent years.

Background: CRD is the state agency responsible for enforcing California's civil rights laws. The department's primary duties involve investigating and litigating complaints of unlawful discrimination in employment, housing, businesses, and state-funded programs. CRD also conducts anti-discrimination trainings, collects and analyzes equal pay data, and operates the state Commission on the State of Hate. According to its website, the commission was established in 2021 and is responsible for monitoring trends in hate activity in the state, engaging in research on hate activity, increasing awareness of the state of hate through public forums and collaborations, and advising local governments, the Governor, the Legislature, and communities on how to prevent and respond to hate activity.

Proposed Law:

- Requires, commencing on or before the later of either July 1, 2026, or one year after the date of the appropriation, CRD to create and implement statewide and regional radio, social media, and television campaigns to discourage discrimination based upon, but not limited to, disability, gender, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation.
- Provides that CRD shall convene a working group to develop a plan to implement these provisions, the members of which shall be appointed as follows:

- Nine members appointed by the director of CRD with expertise in the field of marketing and messaging, specifically on topics germane to this section, who shall reflect the geographic and demographic diversity of the state;
 - One member of the Assembly, appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly;
 - One member of the Senate, appointed by the President pro Tempore of the Senate;
- States that the working group is not subject to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.
- Requires that the percentage of advertisements focused on combating hate violence against a specific community with a common protected characteristic that are created and distributed shall be based on the rate of hate crimes committed against each community with a common protected characteristic as determined by the most recent Hate Crime in California report released by the Attorney General or other reliable and more accurate data on hate violence.
- States that these provisions shall not become operative until funding and positions are appropriated by the Legislature in the Budget Act or any other measure for the purposes of this section. Requires CRD to send notice of the appropriation to the Secretary of State, the Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency, and the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

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