

## CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 648 (Zbur)

As Amended September 2, 2025

Majority vote

**SUMMARY**

Exempts community college districts (CCDs) from complying with local zoning ordinances for university housing development projects that are constructed on property owned or leased by the CCD, provided certain conditions are met. Stipulates that if the project includes housing units for faculty or staff, a portion of those units be made available at affordable rent levels to extremely low income and lower income faculty and staff.

**Senate Amendments**

1) Define the following terms:

- a) "Affordable rent" means an amount consistent with the rent limits established by the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee;
- b) "Extremely low income faculty or staff" means an employee of the California Community Colleges who satisfies the requirements of Section 50106 of the Health and Safety Code;
- c) "Lower income faculty or staff" means an employee of the CCCs who satisfies specified requirements; and,
- d) "Satellite campus" means an auxiliary classroom or a teaching site not a part of the main campus.

2) Delete references to the following terms:

- a) "Faculty and staff housing project;"
- b) "Student housing project;" and,
- c) "University housing development project"

3) Exempt specified housing projects from local zoning laws when built on property owned or leased by a CCD if the site is:

- a) Within a one-half mile radius of a main campus, as defined; or,
- b) Within a one-half mile radius of a satellite campus that existed before July 1, 2025.

4) Specify that if the project includes units for faculty and staff, the CCD must ensure that a portion of the units are made available at affordable rent levels to extremely low income faculty and staff and to lower income faculty and staff.

5) Add a co-author.

## COMMENTS

This measure seeks to provide parity to the CCC and that of the California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC), by exempting the construction of faculty and staff housing projects, student housing projects, and university housing development projects, from local zoning regulations of any city, county, or city and county when constructed on property owned or leased by a CCD.

*Student housing crisis.* According to the May 2024 *Update on Student Housing Assistance* by the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), student housing insecurity can refer to a range of challenges related to student's living arrangements. At California's higher education segments, students are commonly described as housing insecure if they face challenges such as difficulty paying rent or utilities, living in overcrowded units, or needing to move frequently. The higher education segments tend to use "homelessness" to refer more specifically to lacking a stable place to stay at night. The segments' definitions of homelessness typically include students without a permanent home who are temporarily staying with relatives or friends ("couch surfing"), at hotels or motels, in emergency shelters or transitional housing, and in places not meant for habitation (such as cars or tents).

According to LAO, roughly 60% of California's community college students have faced housing insecurity and almost 25% have experienced homelessness.

### **According to the Author**

According to the author, "this bill is aimed at addressing housing insecurity for our community college students and staff and preventing homelessness. California's community college students face some of the highest rates of housing insecurity and homelessness in the state.

The author contends that, "with over 70% of CCC students coming from diverse backgrounds, the system has become a critical pathway for marginalized populations seeking access to higher education and economic mobility. By removing barriers to building community college student housing, this bill will help address the housing insecurity experienced by marginalized students."

### **Arguments in Support**

According to the Santa Monica Community College District (SMCCD), co-sponsors of this measure, "this bill will combat housing insecurity and homelessness among community college students while also addressing California's broader housing crisis by increasing the supply of affordable housing in local communities. The bill will streamline the construction of student housing at CCC by exempting new student and staff housing projects from local zoning regulations if the project is constructed on property owned or leased by a CCD, the same exemption CCDs already have for classroom facilities."

Additionally, SMCCD states that, "this bill will give community colleges the authority to build housing for students and staff on property owned or leased by the CCD without spending years going through the onerous rezoning processes. Community colleges will still be required to follow other local regulations and consult with their local planning department. This will give CCDs the same authority to override local zoning that the UC and CSU systems currently have. In doing so, this bill will remove a significant barrier to addressing homelessness and housing amongst community college students in California."

### Arguments in Opposition

According to the League of California Cities (Cal Cities) and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) in their oppose *unless amended* letter, "existing law allows land owned or leased by the University of California (UC) or California State Universities (CSU) to bypass local zoning. These entities are owned by the state. However, community colleges are not. It is also important to note that Government Code Section 65913.6 provides specific conditions that student housing must comply with, and AB 648 does not have the same conditions for community college districts. The author should consider harmonizing what is required for UCs and CSUs in this bill."

Further, Cal Cities and CSAC contend that, "at a minimum, the proposal should require community college districts to consult with local planning staff and follow the adopted local general plan and their respective zoning regulations regarding where housing can or cannot be developed. In addition, we would encourage the author to allow local jurisdictions to include student housing in their RHNA progress to account for the efforts at the local level to site and plan for affordable student, faculty, and staff housing."

### FISCAL COMMENTS

Unknown. This measure is keyed non-fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

### VOTES:

#### ASM HIGHER EDUCATION: 7-3-0

**YES:** Fong, Boerner, Jackson, Muratsuchi, Patel, Celeste Rodriguez, Sharp-Collins

**NO:** DeMaio, Essayli, Jeff Gonzalez

#### ASM LOCAL GOVERNMENT: 9-0-1

**YES:** Carrillo, Hoover, Pacheco, Ramos, Ransom, Blanca Rubio, Stefani, Ward, Wilson

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Ta

#### ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 63-5-11

**YES:** Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Connolly, Davies, Elhawary, Ellis, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

**NO:** DeMaio, Dixon, Lackey, Sanchez, Tangipa

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Bauer-Kahan, Castillo, Chen, Flora, Gallagher, Jeff Gonzalez, Hadwick, Hart, Macedo, Nguyen, Ta

### UPDATED

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