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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair  
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

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### **AB 667 (Solache) - Professions and vocations: license examinations: interpreters**

**Version:** August 18, 2025

**Urgency:** No

**Hearing Date:** August 25, 2025

**Policy Vote:** B., P. & E.D. 8 - 1

**Mandate:** No

**Consultant:** Janelle Miyashiro

**Bill Summary:** AB 667 requires, beginning January 1, 2027, the non-healing arts boards under the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) to allow an applicant to use an interpreter when taking the written and oral portions of a license examination if the applicant cannot read, speak, or write in English. AB 667 also requires, beginning, January 1, 2029, each board to annually report on language preference data it collects, as specified.

#### **Fiscal Impact:**

- Unknown potentially significant fiscal impact across all non-healing arts programs under the DCA for likely increased examination costs (various special funds). DCA notes that a majority of its programs utilize third-party vendors to administer their various licensing exams. These vendors' costs may increase if additional private rooms to facilitate exams, third-party proctor(s) to monitor candidates, or interpreters in any private rooms would be required to ensure exam integrity. Vendors may pass on these costs to boards through increased contracting costs or to examinees through increased exam fees, or choose to no longer offer examinations.

The bill prohibits a board from charging an applicant a fee, penalty, or surcharge for the applicant's use of an interpreter. To the extent that any increase in vendor or contracting costs cannot be absorbed within current resources, there will likely be ongoing cost pressures to boards, which may necessitate overall increases in license or other fees. Actual costs to each board may depend on the number of applicant requests to use an interpreter received each year and the extent a program currently accommodates the use of interpreters during exams as required by this bill.

- The Office of Information Services within the DCA reports costs of approximately \$358,000 to update application questions and develop a new report, which is not anticipated to be absorbable within existing resources.

**Background:** The DCA consists of 36 boards, bureaus, and other entities responsible for licensing, certifying, or otherwise regulating professionals in California. Of these entities, 16 include boards that license occupations that are not within the healing arts. As of March 2023, there are over 3.4 million licensees overseen by programs under the DCA (including health professionals regulated by healing arts boards). Each licensing program has its own unique requirements, with the governing acts for each profession providing for various prerequisites within the application process, typically including specified education, training, and examination requirements.

**Proposed Law:**

- Beginning January 1, 2027, requires the non-healing arts boards under the DCA to:
  - Permit an applicant to use an interpreter, if the applicant cannot read, speak, or write in English, to interpret the English written and oral portions of a state-administered or contracted license exam to their preferred language, provided the applicant meets all other requirements for licensure and the use of an interpreter is permitted by the terms of the contract for administration of the exam.
    - Prohibits an interpreter from assisting an applicant with any licensure exam for which English language proficiency is required by law or regulation, or from assisting an applicant if an exam is offered in the applicant's preferred language.
    - Prohibits a board from charging an applicant a fee, penalty, or surcharge for the applicant's use of an interpreter.
  - Post on the board's website that an applicant may use an interpreter for exams. Requires the notice to be posted in English, Spanish, Farsi, Hindi, Chinese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Arabic.
  - Include an additional section in a license application that asks an applicant to identify their preferred written, spoken, and signed languages.
- Beginning January 1, 2027, requires each non-healing arts board to conduct an annual review of applicants' language preferences that are collected from license applications and annually report on language preference data collected to the Senate Business, Professions, and Economic Development and the Assembly Business and Professions Committees beginning January 1, 2029.
- Defines an "interpreter" to mean an individual who satisfies all of the following:
  - Is fluent in English and in the applicant's preferred language.
  - Has not acted as an interpreter for the examination within the year preceding the examination date.
  - Is not licensed and has not been issued the license for which the applicant is taking the examination.
  - Is not a current or former student in an educational program for the license for which the applicant is taking the examination.
  - Is not a current or former student in an apprenticeship or training program for the license for which the applicant is taking the examination.
  - Is not a current or former owner or employee of a school for the license for which the applicant is taking the examination.

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