
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 713 (Solache) - Public postsecondary education: student employment

Version: January 5, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 3, 2026

Policy Vote: JUD. 9 - 2, ED. 5 - 2

Mandate: Yes

Consultant: Lenin Del Castillo

Bill Summary: This bill prohibits California public universities, beginning January 6, 2027, from disqualifying a student for employment due to their failure to provide proof of federal employment authorization.

Fiscal Impact:

- The University of California estimates unknown but potentially significant litigation costs, to the extent this bill results in litigation and a legal judgment implicating federal work authorization requirements. There would also be one-time General Fund implementation costs in the mid-hundreds of thousands of dollars to develop systemwide regulations, update internal HR policies, and retrain hiring personnel.
- The Chancellor's Office estimates one-time Proposition 98 General Fund costs of between \$936,000 and \$1.6 million for the 72 community college districts to update policies and procedures regarding the hiring of undocumented workers and ensure compliance with other state and federal laws (such as income taxes). The Chancellor's Office also estimates one-time General Fund costs of \$25,000 to \$65,000 to develop Title 5 regulations and issue guidance.
- The California State University (CSU) estimates General Fund costs in the hundreds of thousands of dollars to update CSU policies and provide guidance to campuses. Additionally, the CSU anticipates the bill is likely to be challenged in court which could result in significant but unknown legal costs.
- The Department of Justice does not anticipate significant costs resulting from this bill.

Background: Existing law establishes the University of California (UC) as a public trust to be administered by the Regents of the UC; and grants the Regents full powers of organization and government, subject only to such legislative control as may be necessary to insure security of its funds, compliance with the terms of its endowments, statutory requirements around competitive bidding and contracts, sales of property and the purchase of materials, goods, and services.

Existing law confers upon the California State University (CSU) Trustees the powers, duties, and functions with respect to the management, administration, and control of the CSU system and provides that the Trustees are responsible for the rule of government of their appointees and employees.

Existing law establishes the California Community Colleges (CCCs) under the administration of the Board of Governors of the CCC, as one of the segments of public postsecondary education in this state, and specifies that the CCC is comprised of community college districts.

Existing federal law makes it unlawful for a person or other entity to:

1. Hire, recruit, or refer for a fee for employment in the United States an individual without authorization to work in the United States when the person or other entity knows the individual is not authorized to work in the United States.
2. Hire for employment in the United States an individual without complying with specified employment authorization verification processes, or, if the person or other entity is an agricultural association or employer or farm labor contractor, to hire, recruit, or refer for a fee an individual for employment without complying with specified employment authorization verification processes.

Existing federal law establishes the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 and specifies that certain immigrants shall not be eligible for any state or local public benefit, except as provided. It defines “state or local public benefit” to mean the following:

1. Any grant, contract, loan, professional license, or commercial license provided by an agency of a state or local government, or by appropriated funds of a state or local government.
2. Any retirement, welfare, health, disability, public or assisted housing, postsecondary education, food assistance, unemployment benefit, or any other similar benefit for which payments or assistance are provided to an individual, household, or family eligibility unit by an agency of a state or local government or by appropriated funds of a state or local government.

Proposed Law: This bill prohibits the UC, CSU, and CCCs from disqualifying a student from being hired for an employment position due to their failure to provide proof of federal work authorization, except where that proof is required by federal law or where that proof is required as a condition of a grant that funds the particular employment position for which the student has applied.

This bill requires the UC, the CSU and CCCs to treat the prohibition on hiring undocumented noncitizen in the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 as inapplicable because that provision does not apply to any branch of state government. It also provides that, to the extent student employment is considered a “benefit” for purpose of federal law, the provision constitutes authorization by the state to provide that benefit to undocumented individuals pursuant to the exception in the federal PRWORA.

This bill provides that its provisions shall be implemented by January 2027.

This bill specifies that it applies to the UC, unless it is found to be inapplicable to the UC, in which case the bill is only to apply to the extent the UC Regents make it applicable by an appropriate resolution.

Staff Comments: This bill prohibits the UC, CSU, and Community Colleges from disqualifying a student applicant for an on-campus job solely on the fact that they cannot provide proof of their federal employment authorization, unless proof is required by federal law or is required as a condition of a grant that funds the position. According to the author, "California has a long-standing commitment to expanding access, affordability, equity, and student success in higher education. Since at least 2001, the Legislature has enacted multiple policies to support undocumented students, including eligibility for in-state tuition, access to state financial aid, loans, and grants. Despite these efforts, undocumented students continue to face significant financial and structural barriers that prevent them from fully accessing and completing higher education. One of the most significant barriers is the inability to access paid on-campus employment opportunities solely due to immigration status. AB 713 would remove this barrier by allowing all students, regardless of immigration status, to access on-campus jobs. By providing equal access to these opportunities, the bill would reduce financial and structural inequities, help students persist in higher education, and promote more equitable outcomes across California's public higher education systems."

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