
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 715 (Zbur) - Educational equity: discrimination: antisemitism prevention

Version: September 9, 2025

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: September 11, 2025

Policy Vote: ED. 6 - 0

Mandate: Yes

Consultant: Lenin Del Castillo

Bill Summary: This bill establishes the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) within the Government Operations Agency (GovOps) and the position of Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator under the OCR. This bill also requires local educational agencies (LEAs) that know or have reason to know that instructional or professional development materials were used that violate existing anti-discrimination laws to investigate and remediate the action. Further, this bill requires instruction and instructional materials to be factually accurate, align with the adopted curriculum and existing standards for instructional materials, and be consistent with accepted standards of professional responsibility.

Fiscal Impact:

- The GovOps estimates General Fund costs of approximately \$4 million each year and 6.0 positions to establish and operate the OCR and the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator. This estimate includes \$1.5 million for staffing and the remaining \$2.5 million for various operating expenses and equipment, including the development of educational materials, providing guidance and technical assistance to LEAs, advising on and responding to complaints, and holding forums and meetings in various locations. However, this estimate could be higher depending on additional workload that is unknown at this time. Staff notes that the 2025 budget bill juniors—AB 105 (Gabriel, 2025) and SB 105 (Wiener, 2025), both include Control Section 92.00 which would authorize the Director of Finance to augment the amount of any appropriation for any state department or agency from the General Fund to provide personnel and other resources necessary to implement AB 715 (Zbur) and SB 48 (Gonzalez).
- The bill includes legislative intent to enact future legislation to establish coordinators to be employed within the office to prevent and address discrimination and bias and enact the duties and responsibilities of the coordinators. This could lead to future General Fund cost pressures in the high hundreds of thousands of dollars each year for the state to establish these positions.
- This bill could result in additional, unknown General Fund cost pressures for the OCR to develop a training module to process and resolve discrimination complaints, as specified. This provision is contingent upon an appropriation.
- There could be additional, unknown Proposition 98 General Fund cost pressures, potentially in the millions of dollars each year, for LEAs to ensure that instruction

provided by teachers and the instructional materials that are adopted comply with the bill's requirements. This includes increased oversight and monitoring by LEA governing boards to account for all instructional materials currently used in their schools and the investigation of complaints. These costs may be deemed to be reimbursable by the state.

- The CDE estimates General Fund costs of \$1.2 million each year and 7.0 positions for various workload activities required by the bill, including support for complaint resolution, processing of appeals, and requiring specified corrective action to be taken by LEAs.
- This bill could expand the number of complaints filed under the Uniform Complaints Procedures (UCP) process, thereby increasing Proposition 98 General Fund costs associated with the existing UCP mandate. The extent of these costs is unknown and would depend on the number of complaints filed each year. The UCP mandate has an adopted statewide cost estimate of \$209,613 and a prospective cost of \$34,751 each year.
- This bill could result in additional, unknown General Fund and Proposition 98 General Fund costs associated with lawsuits and litigation that may result from disputes over instruction provided by teachers and the instructional materials used in schools. The bill requires instruction and instructional materials to be factually accurate and to be consistent with accepted standards of professional responsibility.

Background: Existing law prohibits any person from being subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, including immigration status, in any program or activity conducted by an educational institution that receives, or benefits from, state financial assistance, or enrolls pupils who receive state student financial aid.

Existing law prohibits a teacher from giving instruction and a school district from sponsoring any activity that promotes a discriminatory bias on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, nationality, or sexual orientation, or because of a characteristic listed in Section 220.

Existing law prohibits the State Board of Education (SBE) and any governing board from adopting any textbooks or other instructional materials for use in the public schools that contain any matter reflecting adversely upon persons on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, nationality, or sexual orientation, or because of a characteristic listed in Section 220. It also prohibits a governing board from prohibiting the continued use of an appropriately adopted textbook, instructional material, or curriculum on the basis that it contains inclusive and diverse perspectives.

Existing law prohibits a governing board from adopting any instructional materials for use in the schools that, in its determination, contain: any matter reflecting adversely upon persons on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, nationality, or

sexual orientation, occupation, or because of a characteristic listed in Section 220 and any sectarian or denominational doctrine or propaganda contrary to law.

Existing law requires the SBE, in reviewing and adopting or recommending for adoption submitted basic instructional materials, to use specified criteria, and ensure that, in its judgment, the submitted basic instructional materials meet specified criteria, including consistency with the criteria and the standards of quality prescribed in SBE's adopted curriculum framework, compliance with specified requirements in existing law related to how people are portrayed, and SBE's guidelines for social content, and whether they are factually accurate and incorporate principles of instruction reflective of current and confirmed research.

Existing law requires CDE to notify an LEA that it must take corrective action if the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) determines, pursuant to a complaint of discriminatory instructional or professional development materials filed directly with the SPI or an appeal of a LEA decision regarding a complaint.

Proposed Law: This bill establishes the OCR under the administration of GovOps, for the purpose of working directly with LEAs to prevent and address discrimination and bias pursuant to existing anti-discrimination laws. It requires the Director of OCR to be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, and provides that the OCR shall engage with and seek advice from discrimination prevention coordinators established by this and a companion bill.

This bill establishes various requirements for the OCR, in consultation with CDE and under the supervision of GovOps, including:

1. Provide education and educational resources to identify and prevent antisemitism and other forms of discrimination and bias, and share relevant laws and regulations with educational state agencies, LEAs, and community stakeholders.
2. Annually submit a report to GovOps, SPI, the executive director of SBE, and the Legislature on the state of discrimination and bias in LEAs. Requires the report to include specific information on the type of discrimination or bias against a group protected by existing anti-discrimination laws. Requires the report to be made publicly available on the GovOps website.
3. Recommend strategies to LEAs and CDE to combat discrimination or bias against groups protected by existing anti-discrimination laws, including proactive strategies using a restorative justice approach with a focus on repairing harm, fostering empathy, and healing relationships.
4. Annually review, beginning January 1, 2027, a report that CDE is required to provide to OCR with a summary of all complaints made pursuant to the existing Uniform Complaint Procedures that involve discrimination. Requires the summary to include specific information on the type of discrimination or bias, any action taken by CDE in response to the complaint, and the timeline for that action, and the disposition of the complaint.

5. Advise on subsequent action regarding complaints made pursuant to the existing Uniform Complaint Procedures that involve discrimination, as specified.
6. Provide assistance, in consultation with the office of the Attorney General (AG) and CDE, on proper protocols to respond to discrimination complaints filed pursuant to the existing Uniform Complaint Procedures.
7. Develop a training module, in consultation with CDE, the executive director of SBE, and the office of the AG, and subject to an appropriation, regarding the appropriate manner to process and resolve discrimination complaints filed pursuant to the existing Uniform Complaint Procedures. Requires the training module to include, but not be limited to, information on timelines, appeals, and protocols regarding the interaction with students, parents, and school staff, in resolving complaints in a timely manner.

This bill requires the OCR to employ the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator who shall be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator, in consultation with CDE, and under the supervision of GovOps, shall do all of the following:

1. Develop, consult on, and provide antisemitism education to teachers, staff, governing board or body members, administrators, and other LEA personnel to identify and proactively prevent antisemitism.
2. Make recommendations, in coordination with the executive director of SBE, to the Legislature on legislation necessary for the prevention of antisemitism in educational settings.
3. Engage and advise on the actions taken by OCR on issues relating to antisemitism and the Jewish community.
4. Engage with LEAs on the handling of antisemitism.
5. Track and report, beginning September 1, 2027, to the Legislature, the executive director of SBE, and the SPI complaints and resolutions or lack of resolutions for complaints made pursuant to the existing Uniform Complaint Procedures relating to antisemitism in all LEAs.
6. Engage with relevant community stakeholders, as determined by the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator, in the execution of their duties.

This bill requires the United States National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism published by the Biden Administration on May 25, 2023 to be a basis to inform the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator on how to identify, respond to, prevent, and counter antisemitism.

This bill includes legislative intent to enact future legislation to establish coordinators to be employed within OCR to prevent and address discrimination and bias and enact the duties and responsibilities of the coordinators.

This bill extends the prohibition against the adoption or approval of discriminatory instructional materials to also apply to professional development materials. It also requires the governing board of a school district, county board of education, or governing body of the charter school, if it knows or has reason to know that materials (instructional or professional development materials) were used in a classroom or an action occurred that violated existing anti-discrimination law, to investigate and remediate the action, which may include, but is not limited to, the implementation of restorative justice practices.

This bill prohibits the governing board of a school district, a county board of education, or the governing body of a charter school from adopting or approving the use of any professional development materials or services if the professional development materials or services promote, endorse, or otherwise support actions or the use of any textbook, instructional material, supplemental instructional material, or curriculum which would subject a student to unlawful discrimination. It also requires instructional materials, including but not limited to materials adopted by SBE or any governing body, to be factually accurate and reflect the adopted curriculum and standards in existing law, and be consistent with accepted standards of professional responsibility, rather than advocacy, personal opinion, bias or partisanship.

This bill requires teacher instruction to be factually accurate and align with the adopted curriculum and standards in existing law, and be consistent with accepted standards of professional responsibility, rather than advocacy, personal opinion, bias or partisanship.

This bill provides that discriminatory bias in instruction and school-sponsored activities does not require a showing of direct harm to members of a protected group. It also provides that members of a protected group do not need to be present while the discriminatory bias is occurring for the act to be considered discriminatory bias.

This bill requires corrective action to be taken if the governing board or body of a LEA finds that instruction or school-sponsored activities are discriminatory.

This bill authorizes CDE to require an LEA that has been found to have violated existing anti-discrimination law to take specified corrective action, as specified.

This bill requires instructional materials that are found to violate existing anti-discrimination law to immediately and permanently be omitted from course materials and prohibits its use in any current or subsequent course offerings. It also requires corrective action to be implemented as soon as possible and no later than the beginning of the next school year.

This bill requires an LEA or the SPI, if the LEA or SPI determine that, pursuant to a complaint filed directly with the SPI or on appeal of a LEA's decision regarding a complaint that an organization contracted to provide any textbook, instructional material, professional development material, supplemental instructional material, or curriculum violated existing anti-discrimination law, to notify the organization that it must take corrective action. The bill authorizes CDE to use any means authorized by law to effect compliance if corrective action is not taken within 60 days.

This bill requires an organization that contracts to provide a textbook, instructional material, professional development material, supplemental instructional material, or curriculum that the LEA or SPI determines to be a violation of existing anti-discrimination law, to do both of the following: reimburse all funds received for their services from the LEA; and disclose the determination that they have been found in violation of the state's antidiscrimination laws by notifying every LEA that they are contracted with to provide services for and as part of any proposal to contract their services with a LEA. The bill requires the disclosure to conspicuously display hyperlinks to the published documentation of the determination from the LEA or SPI that the organization violated anti-discrimination law.

This bill authorizes a party to a written complaint of discrimination to appeal based on a LEA's failure to issue an investigation report within the required timeline directly with the SPI. The bill requires CDE, prior to direct intervention by the SPI, to attempt to work with the LEA and issue a LEA investigation report within the required timeline.

This bill requires CDE, by October 1 of each year, to issue a management bulletin to all LEAs describing the protections, requirements, and responsibilities prescribed by this bill. It also requires the SPI, in consultation with the executive director of SBE and the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator, to develop and maintain a distinct webpage containing resources and information specific to antisemitism on its website.

This bill expands required annual parental notifications to also advise parents and guardians of the protections, requirements, and responsibilities prescribed by this bill.

This bill includes a severability clause, whereby if any provision of this bill or its application is held invalid, that invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application.

The bill includes a contingency clause relative to SB 48 (Gonzalez, 2025) where both measures must become law for the other bill to be enacted.

Related Legislation: SB 48 (Gonzalez, 2025) would establish the following positions within OCR: religious discrimination prevention coordinator, race and ethnicity discrimination prevention coordinator, gender discrimination prevention coordinator, and LGBTQ discrimination prevention coordinator. SB 48 is pending in the Assembly.

SB 1421 (Stern, 2024) would have required CDE to establish OCR within CDE and shifts to this new office the existing duties of CDE's Education Equity Uniform Complaint Procedures Office relative to complaints that allege unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying against any protected group. This bill was held on the Suspense File in this Committee.

Staff Comments: This bill establishes the OCR under the administration of GovOps for the purpose of working directly with LEAs to prevent and address discrimination and bias pursuant to existing anti-discrimination laws. The bill prescribes the duties of OCR, including the provision of education and educational resources, recommending strategies to combat discrimination or bias in LEAs, providing technical assistance to resolve discrimination issues, and providing assistance on proper protocols to respond to discrimination complaints filed pursuant to the existing UCP. The bill also requires

the OCR to employ the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator to develop, consult on, and provide antisemitism education to educators. Additionally, the coordinator would be required to engage and advise on the actions taken by OCR on issues relating to antisemitism and the Jewish community, engage with LEAs on the handling of antisemitism, and track and report about complaints and resolutions or lack of resolutions for complaints made pursuant to the existing UCP relating to antisemitism in all LEAs.

According to the author, “AB 715 is a multi-pronged approach to address the concerning rise of antisemitism in K-12 education. This bill was crafted with input from a diverse group of stakeholders, including teachers and other education leaders and experts. AB 715 strengthens protections against antisemitism and all forms of discrimination in order to address increased instances of antisemitism in K-12 education, and fosters safe and supportive schools for all students. The bill establishes a state-level Office of Civil Rights for TK-12 education that includes an Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator, strengthens laws prohibiting discrimination in schools and strengthens their enforcement mechanisms, ensures complaints of discrimination can be elevated to the State Superintendent when a local educational agency fails to respond, and requires districts that engage in discrimination to remove violating materials and comply with corrective action plans. Together, these changes will provide enhanced protections and better pathways to justice for not only the Jewish community, but all students facing discrimination.”

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