

SENATE THIRD READING
SB 1012 (Smallwood-Cuevas)
As Amended August 18, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires the Pre-Release Construction Trades Certificate Program's joint advisory committee, in consultation with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), and the fire camp program, to facilitate the post-release admission of program graduates into state-approved apprenticeship *programs for the construction craft laborer occupation and for those programs*, to evaluate these individuals for admission with advanced standing.

Major Provisions

- 1) Amends the joint advisory committee's responsibility to facilitate the post-release admission of graduates of preapprenticeship programs for incarcerated individuals into state-approved apprenticeship *programs for the construction craft laborer occupation and for those programs* to include graduates of the fire camp program.
- 2) Requires the joint advisory committee, in consultation with CDCR, CAL FIRE, DIR, and the fire camp program, to facilitate the admission of graduates of the program, after release, into state-approved apprenticeship *programs for the construction craft laborer occupation and for those programs*, to evaluate such individuals for admission with advanced standing based on prior coursework and work experience.
- 3) Provides that successful *participation* of fire camp programs, including, but not limited to, wildland firefighter training, such as environmental remediation and forestry management *and* emergency response, shall constitute qualifying experience for a state-approved apprenticeship *for the construction craft laborer occupation* under the Division of Apprenticeship Standards.
- 4) Requires CDCR, in partnership with CAL FIRE and the fire camp program, to ensure that all individuals who *successfully participate in the* program receive a *written* certification *reflective of the training completed* to ensure eligibility for state-approved apprenticeship *programs for the construction craft laborer occupation*.
- 5) *Delays the operative date of this bill until July 1, 2027.*
- 6) *Makes conforming changes.*

COMMENTS

According to the Author

"SB 1012 recognizes the tremendous skill and sacrifice of incarcerated individuals who serve in the California Conservation Fire Camp program by ensuring they have access to equitable pathways that lead to real opportunities upon release. For too long, the state has relied on

incarcerated fire camp participants while offering limited opportunities for stable employment once they return home.

"SB 1012 expands the state's commitment to fire camp participants by ensuring they receive the support needed to continue serving California after their time has been served. In doing so, this bill helps address critical public safety workforce needs, reduces recidivism, and creates pathways to meaningful careers."

Arguments in Support

According to the *NextGen California*, one of the bill's co-sponsors, "Successful reentry into society after incarceration remains a significant challenge for far too many justice-involved individuals facing systemic barriers to sustainable, long-term careers. Despite past investments in programs that support successful reentry for those formerly incarcerated, the state has taken advantage of incarcerated fire camp participants – training them and then placing them in dangerous conditions fighting fires only to provide them with little in the way of employment opportunities upon release.

"SB 1012 tackles this issue by requiring the existing joint advisory committee under the Prerelease Construction Trades Certificate Program, in consultation with relevant state agencies, to help facilitate admission of fire camp graduates into relevant state-approved apprenticeship programs, including evaluation for advanced standing based on prior coursework and work experience. The bill also specifies that successful completion of conservation camp programs constitutes qualifying experience for state-approved apprenticeships in the building and construction trades and requires that participants receive a certification acknowledging their training and work experience.

"California continues to face growing wildfire risk and an urgent need for a trained workforce capable of supporting vegetation management, fuel reduction, and defensible space efforts. SB 1012 aligns workforce development, public safety, and successful reentry in a way that benefits workers, communities, and the state as a whole."

Arguments in Opposition

None submitted.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

- 1) Significant annual costs to CDCR for workload associated with program development and expansion, interdepartmental coordination, and the validation and tracking of training skills and competencies (General Fund), to the extent this bill results in new or expanded requirements related to the Pre-Release Construction Trades Certificate Program.
- 2) The Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS), within DIR, estimates a fiscal impact of \$450,000 in the first year and \$400,000 for the second and third year (Apprenticeship Training Contribution Fund), to evaluate camp graduates for advanced standing against approved apprenticeship standards and to communicate the bill's qualifying-experience designation to sponsoring committees. DAS has advised that the bill does not make clear whether the qualifying-experience provision substitutes for pre-apprenticeship completion in

a sponsoring committee's admissions decision or only counts toward advanced standing after admission, and the broader reading may not be captured in the estimate.

- 3) Costs of an unknown amount, likely minor, to CAL FIRE and DIR to participate in the joint advisory committee to facilitate the admission of program graduates into apprenticeship programs (special funds, General Fund).

VOTES

SENATE FLOOR: 39-0-1

YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNeerney, Menjivar, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Niello

ASM PUBLIC SAFETY: 9-0-0

YES: Schultz, Alanis, Hart, Haney, Harabedian, Lackey, Nguyen, Ramos, Sharp-Collins

ASM LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT: 7-0-0

YES: Ortega, Alanis, Chen, Elhawary, Kalra, Lee, Ward

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

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