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**SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT AND RETIREMENT**  
**Senator Lola Smallwood-Cuevas, Chair**  
**2025 - 2026 Regular**

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<b>Bill No:</b>	SB 1207	<b>Hearing Date:</b>	April 22, 2026
<b>Author:</b>	Laird		
<b>Version:</b>	April 15, 2026		
<b>Urgency:</b>	No	<b>Fiscal:</b>	Yes
<b>Consultant:</b>	Glenn Miles		

**SUBJECT:** California Conservation Corps

**KEY ISSUE**

This bill authorizes California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) members to buy back not more than three years of service credit for their prior service in the California Conservation Corps (CCC). The bill also makes changes to CCC's statutes to clarify the scope of authorized projects and to specifically permit CCC to contract with corps established by California Native American tribes.<sup>1</sup>

**ANALYSIS**

**Existing law:**

- 1) Permits a CalPERS member to elect at any time prior to retirement to receive credit for public service, as specified, in addition to the member's current and prior service credit, provided that the election is accompanied by a lump-sum payment of the contributions and interest required for the credit or by authorization for immediate institution of payroll deduction of installment payment of the contributions and interest. (Government Code § 21032 et seq.)
- 2) The right of election is subject to provisions that prohibit credit for the same service in two retirement systems and prohibit credit for more than one year of service for service rendered in any fiscal year. (Government Code § 21032, referencing §§ 20894 and 20961, respectively)
- 3) Provides several definitions for "public service" for purposes of purchasing service credit, including service with a state, school employer, or contracting agency prior to becoming a CalPERS member. (Government Code § 21020 et seq.)
- 4) Provides that the definition for "public service" for purposes of purchasing service credit, includes time served, not to exceed three years, as a volunteer in the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps VISTA, or AmeriCorps. (Government Code § 21023.5)
- 5) Authorizes CCC programs, including the management of environmentally important lands and water, public works projects, facilitating public use of resources, assistance in emergency

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<sup>1</sup> The bill's provisions related to CCC's scope and program elements are within the jurisdiction of the Senate Natural Resources Committee, which analyzed the bill prior to this committee. Please see SNRC's April 14, 2026, committee hearing policy analysis for a detailed analysis of those provisions.

operations, assistance in fire prevention and suppression, energy conservation, and environmental restoration. (PRC § 14300)

- 6) Specifies that, notwithstanding any other provision of law, corpsmembers and special corpsmembers, other than staff officers and employees, shall not receive state retirement benefits. (Public Resources Code § 14310)

**This bill:**

- 1) Includes in the definition of “public service” for purposes of purchasing CalPERS service credit, time served, not to exceed three years, as a corpsmember or special corpsmember with the CCC.
- 2) Requires any CalPERS member electing to receive credit for their CCC time to make contributions to CalPERS for the service credit cost, as specified.
- 3) Amends the prohibition in the Public Resources Code on CCC corpsmembers from receiving state retirement benefits to make an exception for CalPERS members who are purchasing service credit under this bill’s provisions, as specified.
- 4) Includes CCC participants in the Labor Code provision that excepts salesperson and participants in national service organizations from Labor Code provisions regulating wages, hours, and working conditions.
- 5) Makes other changes to Public Resources Code sections governing the CCC related to CCC’s scope and program elements.<sup>2</sup>

## COMMENTS

### 1. Background:

CalPERS pension benefits are principally determined by three factors: age at retirement, final compensation, and years of service (i.e., service credit). Increasing one or more of these factors generally results in a higher pension benefit at retirement.

Current law allows CalPERS members to purchase service credit for their time served in “public service” prior to becoming a CalPERS member, provided the member makes required pension contributions, as specified.

Generally, this option applies to a CalPERS member who initially worked for a public agency in a position or time-base ineligible for CalPERS membership but who later became a CalPERS member. However, CalPERS members can also purchase service credit of up to three years for time they worked with certain national service organizations such as the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America), and AmeriCorps. This bill would add the CCC to the list of service organizations for which a CalPERS member could purchase service credit.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

**2. Need for this bill?**

According to the author:

“Currently, individuals who serve in AmeriCorps programs (either within or outside of California) are permitted to purchase up to three years of retirement service credit through CalPERS, recognizing their national service while supporting their long-term retirement security. However, California Conservation Corps (CCC) Corpsmembers do not have the same ability to purchase service credit for their time with the CCC, despite undertaking a similar commitment and performing similar project work in emergency response and natural resource protection, specifically within and to benefit California. This creates an inequity, as only a small portion of the Corpsmember population has the option of enrolling in AmeriCorps while serving in the CCC if enrolled in the CCC’s two AmeriCorps-specific programs (Backcountry Trails [BCTP] and Watershed Stewards Program [WSP]).”

**3. Proponent Arguments:**

According to the California Association of Local Conservation Corps:

“SB 1207...ensures Corpsmembers are able to purchase comparable service credit toward their public-sector retirement. In fact, the opportunity is already available to other services like AmeriCorps and Peace Corps, where participants are able to purchase up to three years of state service credit. By passing this bill, the Legislature recognizes the civic responsibility and dedication of Corpsmembers, while encouraging them to enter full-time public service.”

According to the California Conservation Corps Foundation:

“Currently, Corpsmembers are unable to make that commensurate purchase. This stands in contrast to the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps, where participants have long been able to purchase comparable service credit toward their public-sector retirement.”

“For a half-century, the mission of the CCC has been to protect and enhance the state’s natural resources and communities while empowering young adults through training, hard work and education. By passing this bill, California will take an important step towards recognizing the civic responsibility and dedication of Corpsmembers, while encouraging them to enter full-time public service.”

**4. Opponent Arguments:**

None received.

**5. Dual Referral:** The Senate Rules Committee referred this bill to the Senate Natural Resources Committee and to the Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee.**6. Prior Legislation:**

AB 2094 (Committee on Public Employment and Retirement, Chapter 546, Statutes of 2002) authorized CalPERS members to purchase up to three years of service credit for service performed as a volunteer in AmeriCorps.

AB 596 (Honda, Chapter 834, Statutes of 1999) authorizes CalPERS members to purchase up to three years of service credit for time served as a volunteer in the Peace Corps or Vista.

**SUPPORT**

California Association of Local Conservation Corps  
CCC Foundation

**OPPOSITION**

None Received

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