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# SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair  
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

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## SB 1227 (Durazo) - Department of Industrial Relations: apprenticeship pilot program

**Version:** April 16, 2026

**Urgency:** No

**Hearing Date:** May 4, 2026

**Policy Vote:** L., P.E. & R. 5 - 0

**Mandate:** No

**Consultant:** Robert Ingenito

**Bill Summary:** SB 1227 would require the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) and the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) to partner with the bargaining units representing DIR employees on or before January 1, 2028, to design and develop an apprenticeship program that addresses the DIR's staffing challenges for filling positions in civil service classifications, including, but not limited to industrial hygienists.

### Fiscal Impact:

- DIR would incur administrative costs to work with specified entities to design and develop the apprenticeship program (special fund). The department has yet to identify the magnitude, but costs minimally would reach the hundreds of thousands of dollars (special fund).
- CalHR would incur first-year costs of \$173,000, and \$166,000 annually thereafter, to implement the provisions of the bill (General Fund).

**Background:** Under current law, state departments in conjunction with CalHR identify discrete work tasks required for a position, and the State Personnel Board (SPB) in coordination with CalHR develops and approves classifications for civil service positions to conduct those tasks, as well as the competitive examinations for applicants for appointment to those positions. The process of competitive examination is part of, and key to, meeting the state constitutional requirement that the civil service be merit-based.

However, any program that seeks to obtain for its participants a permanent appointment to a state civil service position must meet the requirement that the appointment be based on merit. The state constitution requires that all state employment be done by state employees who, except as enumerated in the constitution, must belong to the state civil service. The constitution further requires that appointment to the civil service be based on merit through competitive examination, ranked results, and probationary periods that allow the employer to evaluate the employee's skills and competence for the position.

DIR is responsible for enforcing wage laws, workplace safety standards, workers' compensation systems, and apprenticeship programs across the State. Because these functions are labor-intensive—relying on inspectors, investigators, attorneys, and administrative staff—staff vacancies can ripple across multiple systems.

Many DIR roles, such as inspectors, industrial hygienists, and deputy labor commissioners, are directly tied to enforcing workplace rules and investigating violations. When these positions are vacant, fewer inspections and investigations can occur. This can allow unsafe working conditions, wage theft, or labor violations to go undetected or unresolved, undermining worker protections statewide.

**Proposed Law:** This bill, among other things, would do the following:

- Establish the DIR Apprenticeship Pilot Program within the Labor Code.
- Require DIR and CalHR on or before January 1, 2028, to partner with the bargaining units representing DIR employees to design and develop an apprenticeship program (as defined) that addresses the DIR's staffing challenges for filling positions in civil service classifications, including, but not limited to, industrial hygienist.
- Require the apprenticeship program's design, development, and administration to (1) use the meet and confer process, collective bargaining, and joint apprenticeship committees in a manner that is consistent with the requirements of the Ralph C. Dills Act, the Shelley-Maloney Apprenticeship Labor Standards Act of 1939, and the provisions of the Labor code governing apprenticeship, (2) be consistent with the constitutional merit principle (as defined), as specified, and (3) only be implemented subject to an agreement between DIR and its employees' unions despite Government Code provisions that would otherwise permit DIR to impose its version of the program as its Last Best Final Offer.
- Grant a joint apprenticeship committee operating under this bill's provisions all powers afforded to it by the Labor Code and the regulations pertaining to joint apprenticeship committees arising from the Labor Code notwithstanding any other law or regulation.
- Permit the apprenticeship program candidates to include incumbent state employees and prospective state employees not yet employed in the civil service consistent with the bill's selection requirements regarding compliance with the merit principle.
- Require the apprenticeship program to do the following: (1) determine apprenticeship program classification pay scales through the collective bargaining process, (2) provide for the accrual of state service for purposes of seniority credit pursuant to applicable bargaining agreements, as specified, and (3) consider participants who successfully complete an apprenticeship program as qualified and eligible for appointment to the journey classification by way of an apprentice transfer.

**Related Legislation:**

- SB 75 (Smallwood-Cuevas, 2025) would have required the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), in partnership with the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) and recognized building and construction trades councils to establish the Pre-apprenticeship Pathways to Employment Pilot Program to provide incarcerated individuals with access to pre-apprenticeship

training aligned with state-registered apprenticeships in the building and construction trades, no later than January 1, 2028. The bill was vetoed by Governor Newsom.

- AB 291 (Gipson, 2025) would have established the Credentialed Educator Apprenticeships Act to require the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) and the Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) to disseminate, approve, and monitor credentialed educator apprenticeship programs in California. This bill was held under submission on the Suspense File of this Committee.
- AB 694 (Gipson, 2024) would have authorized the establishment of a Teacher Residency Apprenticeship Program to address shortages in the educator workforce, expand the pipeline into the teaching profession, and grow a diverse, local pathway into teaching. This bill was held under submission on the Suspense File of this Committee.

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