

SENATE THIRD READING
SB 388 (Padilla, et al.)
As Amended September 2, 2025
Majority vote

SUMMARY

This bill establishes, until January 1, 2036, the California Latino Commission (CLC) to address the inequities faced by the Latino community in housing, education, economic mobility, labor, and health care.

Major Provisions

- 1) Establishes the CLC and provides the Commission has powers and duties to collect and analyze data regarding disparities and issues faced by Latinos in housing, education, employment, and health care, as well as develop and promote recommendations to address those disparities.
- 2) Requires the CLC to consist of nine members serving two-year terms, with the Governor, President pro Tempore of the Senate, and Speaker of the Assembly each appointing three members.
- 3) Provides Commission members meet at least quarterly to review data, develop strategies, and ensure that state policies are effectively addressing the needs of the Latino community.
- 4) Requires the CLC to host annual public forums, listening sessions, and town hall meetings across California, particularly in areas with significant Latino populations, to ensure that community members have a direct role in shaping the commission's agenda and priorities.
- 5) Requires the CLC to collaborate with the Department of Housing and Community Development, the University of California, the California State University, the California Community Colleges, the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, the State Department of Public Health, the State Department of Education, and other state agencies as needed.
- 6) Requires each state agency to provide appropriate and reasonable assistance to the Commission, as needed.
- 7) Provides that the CLC and its activities shall be supported by appropriations by the Legislature from the General Fund and grants from federal and private sources.
- 8) Requires the CLC to submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature detailing its work, recounting the resources it needs, and recommending policies for the following year.
- 9) Sunsets the CLC on January 1, 2036.
- 10) States legislative findings and declarations.

COMMENTS

Background.

Latino Community in California. The Latino community plays a pivotal role in shaping California's cultural, political, and social fabric. According to the most recent census data, Latinos make up approximately 40% of the state's population, making them the largest ethnic group in California. The majority are Mexican Americans, with significant representation from Central American, South American, and Caribbean backgrounds.

The roots of the Latino community in California stretch back to the 18th century when Spanish explorers and settlers arrived in the region. The area was part of Mexico until the mid-19th century, which influenced early settlement patterns and cultural ties. Significant migrations of Mexicans to California occurred during the 20th century, particularly during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) and the Bracero Program (1942-1964), which allowed Mexican laborers temporary work in the United States. Most recent immigrants have come from various countries in Central and South America due to factors like political instability in immigrant's home countries.

The historical ties to California have resulted in significant cultural contributions to the State of California. Spanish is widely spoken in California, and it is not uncommon to find bilingual education programs and various media outlets targeting Spanish speakers. Celebrations such as Dia de los Muertos, Cinco de Mayo, and various other events highlight the rich cultural heritage of the Latino community. Latino cuisine has also had a profound impact on California's food culture, with Mexican food being a staple in California culinary landscape.

Despite all of these contributions, the Latino community has historically faced many challenges including disparities in housing, education, labor, and healthcare. Additionally, the recent intensification of immigration enforcement in California has profoundly affected the Latino community. For example, recent workplace raids, particularly in agriculture, have created a climate of fear among many Latino workers, leading to economic uncertainty for those workers and their families.

Immigration raids have also resulted in the detention and deportation of individuals, which can lead to separation of families and create unstable situations for children and relatives who may be U.S. citizens.

Additionally, the recent fires in southern California have also dramatically impacted the Latino community in California. According to UCLA's Latino Policy & Politics Institute, at least 74,000 Latinos were directly displaced or at risk of displacement due to the wildfires. Additionally, at least 35,000 jobs held by Latinos are at risk of temporary or permanent displacement due to the wildfires. The institute also found that Latino workers face greater economic instability due to limited opportunities for remote work. This disparity reflects the overrepresentation of Latinos in job requiring physical preference, which are particularly vulnerable to layoffs or closures during natural disasters.

Similar Entities in Other States. Multiple states have created Latino commissions or similar bodies to address issues related to the Latino community, promote advocacy, and provide advice on policies affecting the Latino community in those states. These commissions often serve as advisory boards to state governments and focus on such issues as health, education, immigration, and economic development. For example, the State of Illinois established the Latino Family Commission which purpose is to advise the Governor and the General Assembly, as well as work directly with state agencies to improve and expand existing policies, services, programs, and opportunities for Latino families. In Massachusetts, Governor Maura T. Healy signed an

executive order in 2023, which established the Governor's Council of Latino Empowerment. This council advises the Governor on strategies to expand economic opportunities for and improve the overall wellbeing of Massachusetts's Latino community.

Executive Order (EO) N-16-22. Executive Order (EO) N-16-22. On September 13, 2022, Governor Newsom issued EO N-16-22, directing state agencies to take additional actions to embed equity analysis and considerations in their mission, policies, and practices. Amongst other directives, the EO requires every state agency to incorporate more inclusive public engagement and data analysis, tasks specified agencies to develop recommendations to improve language and communications access to state government services and programs, and establishes the state's first Racial Equity Commission to produce a Racial Equity Framework of resources and tools to promote racial equity and address structural racism. Governor Newsom also appointed the state's first Chief Equity Officer at the Government Operations Agency to oversee these priorities in relation to state operations, procurement, and human resources.

According to the Author

According to the author, "Latinos are the heart of our economy and our culture here in California. Yet, Latinos continue to face enormous challenges across various metrics including in education, housing, health, and economic mobility. We have not done enough to make Latinos part of our conversation as the state looks forward to the future workforce and our economy. As families face a growing affordability crisis, we must seek every avenue to help underserved communities find greater economic mobility and educational outcomes by ensuring those communities are front and center to the challenges impacting them. For a community as diverse as the Latino community, this means ensuring that they are the driver's seat in identifying challenges and priorities to better serve their needs."

Arguments in Support

This bill is supported by the California Latino Legislative Caucus, various community groups, and education entities.

According to the Latino Coalition for a Healthy California, "this proposal mirrors existing commissions and is tasked with making recommendations for the Governor and Legislature, developing initiatives, and monitoring progress in tackling disparities facing Latinos. The Latino community is not monolith. The issues facing Latinos in California face vary across the state, some with more urban challenges to those more commonly found in only the most rural areas. The Latino Commission will act as a focal point for experts to address this community's diverse needs across the state through its ability to conduct research, develop strategies, and outline recommendations across key issues."

Arguments in Opposition

None received

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations analysis,

- 1) Annual GF costs of an unknown amount, potentially in the high hundreds of thousands of dollars to low millions of dollars, to staff and operate the CLC. The author is requesting state budget funding of \$1 million in the first year and \$500,000 ongoing to establish and support

the CLC. At the time of this analysis's preparation, the proposed 2025-26 state budget agreement did not include funding for the CLC.

Costs to the CLC include office space, equipment, staff salaries, and resources for travel and large public meetings across the state, with significantly higher costs if the CLC requires data collection or other information technology infrastructure. It is likely that the CLC will require comparable resources to existing state commissions with related missions and sizes. For reference, the proposed 2025-26 state budget agreement includes \$959,000 and four positions for the Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs (GF) and approximately \$2 million and 14 positions for the Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (\$1.6 million GF, \$357,000 Women and Girls Fund).

- 2) Costs of an unknown, but potentially significant, amount across state agencies to collaborate with the CLC to achieve the CLC's objectives (GF or special fund). Such costs will vary by agency, and may range from minor (if the agency has an informal advisory role) to significant (if formal interagency agreements for assistance are needed)."

VOTES

SENATE FLOOR: 30-8-2

YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Cortese, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

NO: Choi, Dahle, Grove, Jones, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Seyarto, Strickland

ABS, ABST OR NV: Hurtado, Reyes

ASM GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION: 20-1-1

YES: Blanca Rubio, Davies, Alvarez, Berman, Bryan, Carrillo, Alanis, Fong, Gabriel, Gipson, Hoover, McKinnor, Nguyen, Pacheco, Ramos, Michelle Rodriguez, Solache, Soria, Valencia, Wallis

NO: Sanchez

ABS, ABST OR NV: Ta

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-2-2

YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Ahrens, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache

NO: Sanchez, Dixon

ABS, ABST OR NV: Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

VERSION: September 2, 2025

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