

Date of Hearing: August 20, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 456 (Ashby) – As Amended April 2, 2025

Policy Committee:	Arts, Entertainment, Sports, and Tourism	Vote:	9 - 0
	Business and Professions		17 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: No Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill exempts an artist who creates, restores, or preserves a mural from licensure under the Contractors State License Law.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Exempts from the Contractors State License Law an artist who draws, paints, applies, executes, restores, or conserves a mural, as defined, pursuant to an agreement with a person who could legally authorize the work.
- 2) Defines “mural” as a “unique work of fine art that is protected by copyright, trademark, label, or patent and that is drawn or painted by hand directly onto interior or exterior walls or ceilings, fixtures, or other appurtenances of a building or structure.” Specifies “mural” does not include painted wall signs.

FISCAL EFFECT:

The Contractors State License Board (CSLB) anticipates no costs resulting from this bill. They note an exempted classification of work will not require action from CSLB for licensing or enforcement.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** This bill is co-sponsored by California Arts Advocates and the California League of Cities. According to the author:

Murals are powerful tools for transforming neighborhoods. They are placemaking and defining in many cities, like Sacramento. Public art and murals are proven drivers of enhanced community and economic health, attracting tourists, supporting jobs, generating revenue, and improving public health outcomes. However, current law has led to confusion regarding licensing requirements for muralists. [This bill] clarifies that muralists are not subject to licensure and allows them the flexibility to continue sharing their artistic expression throughout our communities.

- 2) **Background.** The CSLB, within the Department of Consumer Affairs, licenses and regulates construction contractors working in California. A license is required for construction projects

valued at \$1,000 or more, including labor and materials. The CSLB issues licenses to business entities and sole proprietors. Each license requires a qualifying individual who directly supervises and controls construction work performed under the license. The qualifying individual must be at least 18 years old, have at least four years of specified work experience, undergo a criminal background check, and pass a contractor law and business exam as well as a trade-specific exam. Additionally, licensed contractors must maintain a contractor's bond and workers' compensation insurance, and pay various fees.

The CSLB issues four license types. Among them is type "C," specialty contractor licenses, which includes 43 classifications. According to the CSLB, it is within the scope of a C-33 (painting and decorating) license to paint a mural on the side of a building. A D-64 non-specialized contractor designation within the C-61 limited specialty contractor qualification also adequately licenses a mural artist. A D-64 license allows the individual to install, modify, maintain, remove, and repair new products or new installations not captured in any other license classification.

In July of 2023, the CSLB issued a notice reasserting the license requirements for muralists, stating, in part:

CSLB is issuing a reminder about contractor license requirements as they relate to the installation or creation of artistic works in public or private places. Some examples might include painting of murals along roadways or on indoor or outdoor walls; bolting, cementing, or welding of metal or iron artistic structures to the ground or to other permanent structures; or installing other durable artwork to indoor or outdoor permanent structures or land.

Whether the ultimate purpose of the work is functional or artistic, such services will require a contractor's license if the activity meets the definition of "contractor" in Business and Professions Code section 7026.

According to California Arts Advocates, as a result of this notice "many cities have instructed their public arts administrators to halt or delay mural projects due to CSLB's actions, causing issues for projects under Clean CA and other initiatives."

Analysis Prepared by: Jennifer Swenson / APPR. / (916) 319-2081