

Date of Hearing: August 20, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 509 (Caballero) – As Amended July 16, 2025

Policy Committee: Emergency Management

Vote: 5 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the Office of Emergency Services (OES) to develop a transnational repression recognition and response training.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Declares the policy of the state to undertake certain actions, including to pursue criminal prosecutions against those who engage in transnational repression and provide support services for victims and communities that may credibly be targeted in transnational repression.
- 2) Requires OES, by January 1, 2027, through its California Specialized Training Institute and in consultation with the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), to develop a transnational repression recognition and response training to provide law enforcement with unbiased information on transnational repression. The training must include certain criteria, including culturally competent outreach to impacted diaspora communities and subject matter experts in order to support effective and unbiased law enforcement responses to transnational repression.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

- 1) Cost pressures of an unknown amount, potentially in the millions of dollars, across state agencies to prioritize and execute directives consistent with the declared policy of the state (General Fund or special fund).
- 2) Annual costs of approximately \$572,000 to OES for three additional staff positions to research, develop, implement, and update the training program (General Fund).
- 3) Minor and absorbable costs to POST to consult with OES on the training program.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

SB 509 is a necessary, first-of-its-kind bill that will safeguard the human rights of diaspora communities in California who are at risk of transnational repression and are at risk of political repression, threats, harm, or even death. By requiring [OES] and [POST] to develop

specialized training for law enforcement, this bill will equip officers to recognize and respond to the growing threat posed by foreign governments targeting diaspora communities.

- 2) **Transnational Repression.** “Transnational repression” refers to actions taken by a foreign government to harass, threaten, and intimidate its current and former citizens and members of the foreign country’s diaspora. A foreign government engaging in transnational repression typically targets political and human rights activists, dissidents, journalists, political opponents, and religious or ethnic minority groups. This bill requires OES to develop a transnational repression recognition and response training to provide law enforcement with unbiased information on transnational repression.
- 3) **Support and Opposition.** This bill is supported by the California Police Chiefs Association and various Sikh community groups, with the Sikh Coalition arguing, “While we recognize acts of transnational repression should be prosecuted as international and federal crimes, and that the federal government must act to hold perpetrating countries accountable, the state of California also has a role to play.”

This bill is opposed by two local law enforcement agencies and various Hindu community groups, with the Hindu American Foundation arguing “the expense for implementing this bill would be significant for an issue that is beyond the purview of local and state government.”

- 4) **Prior Legislation.** AB 3027 (Bains), of the 2023-24 Legislative Session, was substantially similar to this bill. AB 3027 was held on the Senate Appropriations Committee’s suspense file.

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