

Date of Hearing: July 16, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 515 (Richardson) – As Amended April 7, 2025

Policy Committee: Local Government

Vote: 8 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill, beginning January 1, 2027, requires a city, county, or city and county, when collecting demographic data on the ancestry and ethnic origins of its employees, to include additional categories and tabulations for Black or African American groups, as specified.

FISCAL EFFECT:

One-time costs of an unknown, but potentially significant amount to 58 counties and 478 cities, likely exceeding \$150,000 in the aggregate, to comply with the requirements of this bill. Specifically, cities and counties will likely incur one-time costs to update forms and data management systems to include the more detailed categories required by this bill. Some smaller municipalities may incur minimal costs, but large municipalities that employ tens of thousands of people may incur significant costs to comply with this measure. Ongoing local costs are likely to be relatively minor. Local costs are likely reimbursable by the state (General Fund), subject to a determination by the Commission on State Mandates.

COMMENTS:

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

[This bill] advances California's commitment to equity and inclusion by improving how local governments collect demographic data on Black or African American communities. Too often, these groups are lumped into a single category, which masks the unique experiences and challenges of subgroups such as African Americans, Afro-Caribbean's, and African immigrants.

This bill ensures that local agencies align with the data standards already used by state departments, promoting consistency, accuracy, and fairness. By capturing more complete demographic information, [this bill] empowers local governments to develop better-informed policies and programs that serve all communities more effectively.

2) **Background.** Existing law requires the State Controller's Office (SCO) and the Department of Human Resources (DHR), when collecting demographic data as to the ancestry or ethnic origin of persons hired by the state, to include additional collection categories and tabulations for Black or African American groups, including, but not limited to all of the following:

- a) African Americans who are descendants of persons who were enslaved in the United States.
- b) Blacks who are not descendants of persons who were enslaved in the United States including, but not limited to, African Blacks, Caribbean Blacks, and other Blacks.
- c) Unknown or choose not to identify.

Existing law requires the data collected by the SCO and DHR to include the data collected pursuant to these collection categories and tabulations to be included in the Annual Census of Employees in State Civil Service published on or after January 1, 2025. This data, with the exception of any personally identifiable information, must be made available to the public in accordance with state and federal law.

This bill, beginning January 1, 2027, requires a city, county, or city and county that collects demographic information from its employees to include the same collection and tabulation categories listed above for Black or African American groups.

- 3) **Related Legislation.** AB 2089 (Holden), of the 2023-24 Legislative Session, was nearly identical to this bill. AB 2089 held on this committee's suspense file.

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