

Date of Hearing: July 16, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 702 (Limón) – As Amended April 8, 2025

Policy Committee:	Governmental Organization	Vote:	22 - 0
	Judiciary		12 - 0

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

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the Governor and Legislature to publish online the aggregate demographic information of individuals appointed to state boards and commissions.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires, beginning January 1, 2027, the Governor's office to maintain online a list containing specified information for each state board or commission, including any vacancies in membership.
- 2) Requires, by January 1, 2028, and annually thereafter, the Governor's office to create and publish online a report containing specified aggregate demographic information of gubernatorial appointments from the previous year.
- 3) Requires, by January 31, 2028, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of the Senate and Chief Clerk of the Assembly to publish online specified aggregate demographic information of respective legislative appointments of each house from the previous year. The information must include only legislative appointments created by statute and prohibits the inclusion of ex officio appointments of members of the Legislature. The information must also include a specified disclaimer that the information is voluntarily reported and does not accurately reflect the demographics of all legislative appointments. An organization or individual that utilizes or republishes the information is encouraged to include the disclaimer.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Minor and absorbable costs to the Governor's office to maintain and publish the required information. The Governor's Appointments Unit notes it has a new information technology system licensed through the summer of 2027 that will generally enable the office to meet this bill's requirements. Although there will be ongoing costs to renew or modify the license, such costs would likely be incurred to facilitate the work of the unit regardless of this bill.
- 2) Cost pressures of an unknown, but likely absorbable, amount to the Legislature to publish the required information. Unlike other state agencies whose budgets may increase annually (subject to the budget process) in response to rising caseloads and additional workload, the Legislature's ability to spend is more constrained. Specifically, Proposition 140 (1990) set an annual cap on expenditures to support the Legislature's operations. The cap is calculated

based on growth in the state's economy and population, and is completely outside the Legislature's control.

Since the primary purpose of this bill is to create a report, this bill is eligible for this committee's suspense file.

COMMENTS:

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

Collection and reporting of demographic information of gubernatorial and legislative appointees is a crucial step towards ensuring transparency and embedding good governance principles within our statewide appointment process. The annual reports will provide public transparency...help foster trust in the appointment process and demonstrate that opportunities to serve on boards and commissions are available to everyone.

This bill is sponsored by Hispanas Organized for Political Equality and supported by a large coalition of social justice groups.

2) **Governor's Appointment Authority.** A 2022 report by the UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Institute found that Latinos make up 39.1% of the state's population, but only 18.4% of executive appointees. Existing law grants the Governor the authority to make appointments and establishes a policy for boards and commissions to reflect the general public, inclusive of ethnic minorities and women, with appointees from different backgrounds, abilities, interests, and opinions. Existing law also requires the Governor to give particular consideration to judicial candidates from diverse backgrounds and cultures reflecting the state's demographics and requires the Governor to collect and release aggregate demographic data provided by all judicial applicants, appointments, and nominations relative to ethnicity, race, disability, veteran status, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

This bill requires the Governor's office to publish a similar report containing specified aggregate demographic information of all gubernatorial appointments, not just appointments to boards and commissions, from the previous year. This bill also requires each house of the Legislature to publish similar aggregate demographic information. The information pertaining to legislative appointees must include a disclaimer that the information is voluntarily reported and does not accurately reflect the demographics of all legislative appointments, but such a disclaimer is not required for gubernatorial appointees.

3) **Prior Legislation.** SB 782 (Limon), of the 2023-24 Legislative Session, was substantively similar to this bill, except SB 782 applied only to gubernatorial appointments and not legislative appointments. SB 782 was vetoed by Governor Newsom, who stated:

While I remain concerned about the accuracy of a report that relies on optional and self-reported data, I understand the author's goal to provide an additional layer of transparency and accountability regarding appointments for state positions through this report. Although my administration continues to be transparent in this space, I appreciate the additional accessibility a public report would help to

ensure. However, that goal is only achieved with more comprehensive action that includes legislative appointments. With that goal in mind, I am committed to legislation next year that includes the same transparency requirements for appointments by the Administration as well as the Legislature. This parity will ensure a complete picture of appointments throughout the state so we can continue to appoint a diverse group of Californians that reflect the makeup of the state.

SB 702 (Limon), of the 2023-24 Legislative Session, SB 1387 (Limon), of the 2021-22 Legislative Session, and SB 702 (Limon), of the 2021-22 Legislative Session, were all generally similar to SB 782 and vetoed by Governor Newsom.

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