

SENATE THIRD READING  
SB 702 (Limón and Cervantes)  
As Amended September 3, 2025  
Majority vote

## SUMMARY

This bill requires the Governor and both houses of the Legislature to prepare and publish on their respective internet websites the aggregate demographic information of individuals appointed to state boards and commissions, as specified.

### Major Provisions

- 1) Requires the office of the Governor, commencing on January 1, 2027, to maintain on its internet website a list of each board or commission, as well as the board or commission's membership list, stated purpose, duties, meeting frequency, internet website, and any vacancies in its membership.
- 2) Requires the office of the Governor, on or before January 31, 2028, and annually on January 31 thereafter, to create and publish on its internet website a report that contains aggregate demographic information, to the extent available, of appointments by the office of the Governor of the previous year.
- 3) Requires, commencing January 1, 2027, the Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk of the Assembly shall maintain on their respective internet websites, or include a link on their respective internet websites to any available resources that contain, a list of each state board or commission that each house has appointment authority over, as well as the board or commission's membership list, stated purpose, duties, meeting frequency, internet website, and any vacancies in its membership.
- 4) Provides, on or before January 31, 2028, and annually on January 31 thereafter, the Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk of the Assembly shall publish on their respective internet websites, to the extent available, aggregate demographic information on the respective legislative appointments of each house, made from January 1 to December 31, inclusive, of the previous calendar year.
- 5) Specifies the aggregate demographic information shall only include legislative appointments created by statute, and shall not include ex officio appointments of members of the Senate and the Assembly.
- 6) Requires the aggregate demographic information to be published in a manner that does not disclose any personal information and ensures the anonymity of the appointed individuals.
- 7) States "demographic information" includes the voluntarily self-reported ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, county of residence, and military service of the appointed individuals.
- 8) Provides the office of the Governor and the Senate and the Chief Clerk of the Assembly, shall include a specified disclaimer relating to demographic information, as described.

- 9) Provides that any organization or individual that utilizes or republishes the aggregate demographic information is encouraged to include this disclaimer, as specified.

## COMMENTS

### *Background.*

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. The bill would also require the office of the Governor to maintain a list of each state board and commission on its website with specified data on each board and commission and to create and publish a report of aggregated demographic information of gubernatorial appointees, as specified. SB 702 also requires the Secretary of the Senate and Chief Clerk of the Assembly to publish on their respective website aggregate demographic information on their respective legislative appointments of each house, as specified.

*Governor Newsom's Vetoes.* This measure is substantially similar to last year's SB 782 (Limón, 2024), SB 702 (Limón, 2023), SB 1387 (Limón, 2022), and SB 702 (Limón, 2021), all of which were ultimately vetoed by the Governor. In the Governor's veto message of SB 782 (Limón, 2024), he wrote:

*"I am deeply committed to making appointments at every level of government that reflect California's diversity. My office affirmatively and intentionally engages with the Legislature, community partners, nonprofits, and other stakeholders to recruit and develop a diverse and qualified pool of candidates for appointed state positions. I am incredibly proud of the diverse group of Californians who now serve our state in senior, appointed leadership positions.*

*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."*

*Legislative appointments now included.* As noted above, Governor Newsom, in his veto message from last year's SB 782, committed to legislation that includes the same transparency requirements for appointments by the Administration as well as the Legislature. As such, this year's version of the bill now includes similar reporting requirements for appointments made by both the California State Senate and the California State Assembly.

*Thousands of Appointments.* The Governor has authority to make appointments to thousands of positions in state government, from full-time salaried executives of regulatory agencies to members of advisory panels who are paid \$100 per diem to attend quarterly meetings, and many other variations. For the Governor, appointments are a way to shape the makeup of state

government leadership. For appointees, the positions can mean paid employment and career advancement or an opportunity to offer technical expertise, stay engaged in public service on a part-time basis, and influence state policy. Consequently, there is great public interest in who gets appointed and what demographic groups are represented in the Governor's appointees.

*Detailed Information About Boards and Commissions.* The Governor's "Appointments" web page currently identifies open positions, current appointments, applications and forms, and Appointments Office contacts, among other information.

*Data on Judicial Appointments.* Pursuant to current law related to the Governor's authority to make judicial appointments, annual reports starting in 2007 with aggregate demographic data about California state judges and justices are available on the Judicial Council's web site. These reports have enabled the Legislature and the public to track California's progress toward a bench that is more reflective of the state's overall diversity.

*California's Demographic Data.* California is the most populous state in the United States, with a population of about 40 million, and no racial or ethnic group makes up the majority of its population. According to the Public Institute Policy of California, 39% of state residents are Latino, 36% are white, 15% are Asian or Pacific Islander, 6% are African American, fewer than 1% are Native American or Alaska Natives, and 3% are multiracial or other. In terms of gender, California has a higher number of women, 50.2% compared to men, 49.2%.

According to the Williams Institute at UCLA, roughly 5.3%, or a little over two million people in California are a member of the LGBTQ+ community. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention predicts that roughly 23% of California's adult population has some kind of disability. California is also home to 1.8 million veterans.

*Data on Governor's Appointments.* 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. For example, the report found that Latinos make up 39.1% of the state population but only 18.4% of executive appointees. The report notes that Latinas remain the most underrepresented in executive branch appointees among all women.

### **According to the Author**

According to the author, "the collection of legislative and gubernatorial appointee demographic data is a critical step to ensure transparency on statewide boards and commission. The annual report will serve as a tool to show where gaps in representation exists, encourage outreach to communities, and address barriers faced by those seeking an appointment. The annual reports will help build trust in the appointment process and demonstrate that serving on boards and commissions is an opportunity open to all."

### **Arguments in Support**

According to Hispanas Organized for Political Equality, "This bill expands on past efforts by also including legislative appointment, further strengthening transparency. The Governor and Legislature collectively appoint leaders to more than 580 boards and commissions, filling thousands of seats that influence resource allocation, infrastructure, and oversight of critical programs. Without clear public reporting on these appointments, communities cannot assess whether they are equitably represented in these powerful decision-making bodies."

Close the Gap California states, "We know that boards and commissions provide critical pathways for leaders across our communities to contribute to decisions that shape their communities. Yet, there is no existing process for the public to know who is being appointed to these positions and there is limited visibility on the appointment process and entities. We know that transparency is a core tenant of good governance and is critical to instill faith in our communities that California's government is accountable to the people it serves."

### **Arguments in Opposition**

None on file

## **FISCAL COMMENTS**

According to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations analysis,

- 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."

## **VOTES**

### **SENATE FLOOR: 38-0-2**

**YES:** Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Hurtado, Reyes

### **ASM GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION: 22-0-0**

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

### **ASM JUDICIARY: 12-0-0**

**YES:** Kalra, Dixon, Bauer-Kahan, Bryan, Connolly, Harabedian, Macedo, Pacheco, Papan, Sanchez, Stefani, Zbur

**ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-0-4**

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

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Sanchez, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

**UPDATED**

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