

THIRD READING

Bill No: SB 998
Author: Gonzalez (D) and Weber Pierson (D), et al.
Amended: 4/8/26
Vote: 21

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE: 5-1, 4/15/26

AYES: Pérez, Cabaldon, Cortese, Gonzalez, Reyes

NOES: Choi

NO VOTE RECORDED: Ochoa Bogh

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE: 11-1, 4/21/26

AYES: Umberg, Allen, Ashby, Caballero, Durazo, Laird, Reyes, Stern, Wahab,
Weber Pierson, Wiener

NOES: Niello

NO VOTE RECORDED: Valladares

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 5-2, 5/14/26

AYES: Cervantes, Cabaldon, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

NOES: Seyarto, Dahle

SUBJECT: Educational equity: discrimination prevention coordinators

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill establishes roles and responsibilities for the Religious Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, the Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, the Gender Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, and the LGBTQ+ Discrimination Prevention Coordinator under the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and additionally requires the OCR to employ a Disability Discrimination Prevention Coordinator to be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. This bill also requires the OCR to employ a Deputy Coordinator on Anti-Black Racism, a Deputy Coordinator on Anti-Asian American and Pacific Islander (Anti-AAPI) Discrimination, and a Deputy Coordinator on

Anti-Latino Discrimination, and would require these deputy coordinators to report directly to the Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator.

ANALYSIS:

Existing state law:

- 1) States that it is the policy of the State of California to afford all persons in public schools, regardless of their disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, including immigration status, equal rights, and opportunities in the educational institutions of the state. States that the purpose is to prohibit acts that are contrary to that policy and to provide remedies that will eliminate these discriminatory acts, including discrimination not just because of one protected trait, but also because of the combination of two or more protected bases. (Education Code (EDC) § 200)
- 2) States that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, including immigration status, in any program or activity conducted by an educational institution that receives, or benefits from, state financial assistance, or enrolls pupils who receive state student financial aid. (EDC § 220)
- 3) Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to establish and implement a system of complaint processing, known as the Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP), for specified educational programs. (EDC § 33315)
- 4) Requires a local educational agency (LEA), if it finds merit in a complaint, or the SPI finds merit in an appeal, to take corrective actions consistent with the requirements of existing law that will provide a remedy to the affected pupil, or to all affected pupils, parents, and guardians. (EDC § 33315)
- 5) Establishes the OCR under the administration of the Government Operations Agency (GovOps) to work directly with LEAs to prevent and address discrimination and bias, as specified. Requires the OCR to engage with and seek advice from coordinators within the OCR on actions implemented by the OCR. Establishes the position of the Director of the OCR and subjects it to

appointment from the Governor and confirmation by the Senate. (EDC § 33801)

- 6) Requires the OCR, in consultation with the California Department of Education (CDE), and under the supervision of GovOps, to carry out several tasks including providing education and educational resources to identify and prevent antisemitism and other forms of discrimination and bias, and sharing relevant laws and regulations with educational state agencies, LEAs, and community stakeholders; annually submitting a report to GovOps, the SPI, the executive director of the State Board of Education (SBE), and the Legislature on the state of discrimination and bias in all LEAs, as specified; recommending strategies to combat discrimination or bias to CDE and LEAs, including proactive strategies using a restorative justice approach with a focus on repairing harm, fostering empathy, and healing relationships; reviewing reports from the CDE that include summaries of all complaints of discrimination filed pursuant to the UCP and advise on subsequent actions; providing assistance to the office of the Attorney General and the CDE on proper protocols to respond to discrimination complaints filed pursuant to the UCP. (EDC § 33802)
- 7) Establishes the position of the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator, subject to appointment by the Governor and confirmation by the Senate. Requires the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator, in consultation with the CDE, and under the supervision of GovOps to carry out several tasks, including developing, consulting on, and providing antisemitism prevention education specified school personnel; making recommendations in coordination with the executive director of the SBE, to the Legislature on legislation necessary for the prevention of antisemitism in educational settings; engaging and advising on actions taken by the OCR on issues related to antisemitism and the Jewish community; tracking and reporting to the Legislature, the executive director of the SBE, and the SPI, complaints and resolutions or lack of resolutions on complaints made pursuant to the UCP, as specified; and engaging with relevant community stakeholders in the execution of their duties. (EDC § 33803.1)
- 8) Establishes the position of the Religious Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, the Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, the Gender Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, and the LGBTQ Discrimination Prevention Coordinator under the OCR, and subjects each position to appointment by the Governor and confirmation by the Senate. (EDC § 33803.2-33803.5.)

This bill:

- 1) Requires the OCR to provide resources and training on how to properly assist in cases of discrimination that involve the intersectionality of protected characteristics, as specified.
- 2) States that the roles and responsibilities of the discrimination prevention coordinators established pursuant to this bill shall not be limited to their specific title or discrimination subject to allow for flexibility in their roles.
- 3) Repeals placeholder language setting forth the intent of the Legislature to enact future legislation to establish the coordinator roles proposed by this bill.
- 4) Renames the LGBTQ Discrimination Prevention Coordinator as the LGBTQ+ Discrimination Prevention Coordinator.
- 5) Establishes the position of the Disability Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, subject to appointment by the Governor and confirmation by the Senate.
- 6) Requires the Religious Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, the Gender Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, the LGBTQ+ Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, and the Disability Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, in consultation with the CDE and under the supervision of GovOps, to do the following pertaining to their respective communities:
 - a) Develop, consult on, and provide discrimination related education to teachers, staff, governing board and body members, administrators, and other LEA personnel to identify and proactively prevent respective discrimination.
 - b) Provide technical assistance to LEAs to access restorative justice resources, training, and practitioners, as specified.
 - c) Engage with LEAs, upon the request of the SPI, district superintendent, county superintendent of schools, or the governing board or body of an LEA, to ensure administrators are equipped to address conflicts at an early stage with the goal of proactively resolving incidents pertaining to discrimination.
 - d) Provide information on training courses on cultural competency and positive school climate to teachers, administrators, and LEA personnel.

- e) Beginning September 1, 2027, track and report to the Legislature, the executive director of the SBE, the SPI, complaints and resolutions or lack of resolutions of complaints made pursuant to the UCP relating to discrimination in all local LEAs serving pupils in transitional kindergarten (TK), kindergarten, or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive.
 - f) Engage with relevant community stakeholders to address high-priority issues in the prevention of unlawful discrimination.
 - g) Make recommendations, in coordination with the executive director of the state board, to the Legislature on legislation necessary for the prevention of discrimination in educational settings.
- 7) Requires the OCR to employ a Deputy Coordinator on Anti-Black Racism, a Deputy Coordinator on Anti-Asian American and Pacific Islander (Anti-AAPI) Discrimination, and a Deputy Coordinator on Anti-Latino Discrimination, each of which shall report directly to the Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator.
- 8) Requires the respective Deputy Coordinators on Anti-Black Racism, Anti-AAPI Discrimination, and *Anti-Latino Discrimination to do the following pertaining to their respective communities, in addition to the responsibilities assigned to the Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator:*
- a) Make recommendations to the Legislature on legislation necessary for the prevention of anti-Black, Anti-AAPI, and anti-Latino-related incidents or educational disparities.
 - b) Work with the leadership of the OCR to develop a dedicated internet web page with resources and information accessible to support Black, AAPI, and Latino pupils and LEA personnel.
 - c) Annually report statistics on anti-Latino discrimination against pupils and LEA personnel with suggestions on how to prevent anti-Black, Anti-AAPI, and anti-Latino discrimination at the root of the problem.
 - d) Provide information on available training courses that focus on the history and contemporary context of anti-Black, Anti-AAPI, and anti-Latino discrimination within society and in educational settings.

- e) Engage with Black, AAPI, and Latino education-specific organizations when receiving feedback to address anti-Latino discrimination.
- 9) Requires the Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator to track and report complaints and resolutions or lack of resolutions made pursuant to the UCP relating to anti-immigrant discrimination.

Comments

- 1) *Need for the bill.* According to the author, “Last year, the Legislature passed SB 48 (Gonzalez/Weber/Fong/Ward), which created four discrimination prevention coordinators under the newly established Office of Civil Rights. My colleagues and I committed to working on subsequent legislation to clarify the role of each coordinator and create a Disability Discrimination Prevention coordinator based on stakeholder feedback. SB 998 builds on that commitment by establishing clear guidelines and expectations for the service coordinators to provide upon the request of the local educational agency to ensure that all student populations receive equal protection, proactive support services, and timely responses to discriminatory incidents. With the dismantling of the Federal Department of Education, the state must step up to foster a positive campus climate, deliver targeted support services for our student population, and address discrimination against any student in California schools.”
- 2) *Complaint process.* This bill requires the Religious Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, the Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, the Gender Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, and the LGBTQ+ Discrimination Prevention Coordinator to track and annually report on complaints and resolutions, or lack of resolutions of complaints made pursuant to the UCP relating to the respective forms of discrimination in all local LEAs serving pupils TK, kindergarten, or any of grades 1 to 12.

As prescribed by statute and regulations, each LEA has the primary responsibility to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Each LEA is required to investigate complaints alleging failure to comply with applicable state and federal laws and regulations and/or alleging discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, and seek to resolve those complaints.

A complaint through the UCP is a written and signed statement alleging a violation of federal or state laws or regulations, which may include an allegation of unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

- 3) *CDE Resources for Managing Conversations*. In 2023, the Legislature passed AB 1078 (Jackson, Chapter 229, Statutes of 2023), requiring CDE to provide guidance to support school districts, county offices of education (COEs), charter schools, and school personnel in their managing of conversations about race and gender, as well as guidance on how to review instructional materials to ensure that they represent diverse perspectives and are culturally relevant. The resulting guidance is culminated in the AB 1078 Accurate and Inclusive Curriculum webpage, outlining California's existing laws, policies, and resources related to creating safe and inclusive learning environments.
- 4) *Antibias Education Grant Program*. In the 2021–22 and 2022–23 State Budgets, the Legislature appropriated a total of \$20 million to the SPI to establish the Antibias Education Grant Program— funding training and resources to prevent and address bias or prejudice toward any group of people based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, immigration status, language, or any actual or perceived characteristic listed in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code. The statute placed emphasis on preventing antisemitism and bias or prejudice toward groups, including, but not limited to, African Americans, Asian-Pacific Islanders, Latinos, and people who are LGBTQ youth. Across the two cohorts, 104 LEA grantees received award amounts ranging from \$75,000 to \$392,235.
- 5) *The Safe and Supportive Schools Act*. In 2023, the Legislature passed AB 5 (Zbur, Chapter 220, Statutes of 2023), which (1) required CDE to complete the development of an online training curriculum and delivery platform to provide training on cultural competency in supporting LGBTQ students; and (2) requires, LEAs serving students in grades 7-12 to provide and require at least one hour of training annually to all certificated staff, beginning with the 2025-26 school year through the 2029-30 school year.
- 6) *California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education (Collaborative)*. The Collaborative was established in 2021 as a statewide professional development program on genocide for school districts, COEs, and charter school teachers. The Collaborative was initially created by the Jewish Family and Children's Services (JFCS) Holocaust Center in San Francisco with support from the CDE, Marin COE, and the State of California, and was later codified with the passage of SB 1277 (Stern, Chapter 890, Statutes of 2024). The Collaborative also works in close collaboration with the Governor's

Council on Holocaust and Genocide Education. The Collaborative's goals include:

- a) Creating new, standards-aligned lessons on the Holocaust and genocide for all 6-12th grade students in California;
- b) Empowering and unifying educators in teaching the lessons of history and about what happens when bias goes unchecked; and
- c) Combatting rising antisemitism and hate by creating more respectful and empathetic next generations.

In 2024, the Collaborative launched a website to serve as a central location to connect educators with digital resources, including best practices and curricular materials, and information about workshops, trainings, and conferences.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- The Government Operations Agency (GovOps) estimates General Fund costs of \$2.25 million in the 2027-28 fiscal year and \$1.75 million thereafter. This estimate assumes a cost of \$1.25 million for the four new coordinator positions and two additional support positions that GovOps indicates it would need for the added workload requirements. Additionally, GovOps estimates \$250,000 in General Fund costs to develop educational materials to accommodate the expanded responsibilities of the discrimination prevention coordinators and \$750,000 to acquire new office space to accommodate a larger office (\$500,000 would be one-time).
- This bill could expand the number of complaints filed under the Uniform Complaints Procedures (UCP) process, thereby increasing Proposition 98 General Fund costs associated with the existing UCP mandate. The extent of these costs is unknown and would depend on the number of complaints filed each year. The UCP mandate has an adopted statewide cost estimate of \$209,613 and a prospective cost of \$34,751 each year.

SUPPORT: (Verified 5/14/26)

Agudath Israel of California
AJC - Los Angeles

AJC - San Diego
AJC Northern California
Beverly Hills Synagogue
California Legislative LGBTQ Caucus
Democrats for Israel Los Angeles
Disability Rights California
Equality California
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist of America
Hillel of San Diego
Holocaust Museum LA
JCC/Federation of San Luis Obispo
JCRC Bay Area
JCRC Santa Barbara County
JCRC, Jewish Long Beach
Jewish California
Jewish Center for Justice
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Democratic Club of Marin
Jewish Family Service LA
Jewish Family Service of San Diego
Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley
Jewish Federation of Greater Santa Barbara
Jewish Federation of Orange County
Jewish Federation of the Desert
Jewish Federation of the Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys
Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region
Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation
JFCS Long Beach and Orange County
National Council of Jewish Women -San Francisco
Northern California Jewish Labor Committee
Valley Beth Shalom
Youth Justice Education Clinic, Center for Juvenile Law and Policy, Loyola Law School

OPPOSITION: (Verified 5/14/26)

Jewish Parents for Collective Liberation
Jewish Voice for Peace Bay Area
Jewish Voice for Peace Santa Barbara
Jewish Voice for Peace, Los Angeles
National Campus Jewish Alliance California Chapter

Two Individuals

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5/16/26 10:00:41

**** **END** ****