

SENATE THIRD READING
SB 998 (Gonzalez and Weber Pierson)
As Amended June 18, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Establishes the duties and responsibilities for various discrimination prevention coordinators within the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) at the Government Operations Agency (GovOps), establishes a Disability Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, and requires the OCR to employ various deputy discrimination prevention coordinators.

Major Provisions

- 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.
- 2) States that the roles and responsibilities of the discrimination prevention coordinators shall not be limited to their specific title or discrimination subject, to allow for flexibility in their roles.
- 3) Requires that the Religious Discrimination Prevention Coordinator established under the OCR, in consultation with the California Department of Education (CDE) and under the supervision of GovOps, to conduct specified activities, including tracking and reporting to the Legislature, the executive director of the State Board of Education (SBE), and the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) complaints and resolutions or lack of resolutions of complaints relating to religious discrimination in all LEAs serving pupils in TK-12th grade, as specified. States the intent of the Legislature that this report include disaggregated data for the top religious groups targeted for hate crimes, consistent with the most recent report on hate crimes by the Attorney General, including, but not limited to, anti-Muslim, anti-Jewish, anti-Hindu, anti-Catholic, and anti-Sikh discrimination.
- 4) Requires the Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, in consultation with the CDE, and under the supervision of the GovOps, to conduct specified activities, including tracking and reporting to the Legislature, the executive director of the SBE, and the SPI, complaints and resolutions or lack of resolutions of complaints relating to racial and ethnic discrimination in all LEAs serving pupils in TK-12th grade.
- 5) Requires the OCR to employ Deputy Coordinators on Anti-Black Racism, Anti-Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (Anti-AANHPI) Discrimination, Anti-Latino Discrimination, and anti-Native American Discrimination who shall report directly to the Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, and specifies their responsibilities.
- 6) Requires the Gender Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, in consultation with the CDE, and under the supervision of the GovOps, to conduct specified activities, including tracking and reporting to the Legislature, the executive director of the SBE, and the SPI complaints and resolutions or lack of resolutions of complaints made relating to gender discrimination in all LEAs serving pupils in TK-12th grade.

- 7) Requires the LGBTQ+ Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, in consultation with the CDE, and under the supervision of the GovOps, to conduct specified activities, including tracking and reporting to the Legislature, the executive director of the SBE, and the SPI complaints and resolutions or lack of resolutions of complaints made relating to LGBTQ+ discrimination in all LEAs serving pupils in TK-12th grade.
- 8) Requires the OCR to employ a Disability Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, who shall be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, with specified responsibilities, including tracking and reporting to the Legislature, the executive director of the SBE, and the SPI complaints and resolutions or lack of resolutions of complaints made relating to disability-related discrimination in all LEAs serving pupils in TK-12th grade.
- 9) Repeals a statement of intent to enact the duties and responsibilities of the discrimination prevention coordinators.

COMMENTS

Bill establishes duties of discrimination prevention coordinator positions created last year. Last year, AB 715 (Zbur), Chapter 428, Statutes of 2025, established the OCR under GovOps and an Antisemitism Coordinator position within that office.

SB 48 (Gonzalez), Chapter 429, Statutes of 2025, established disability prevention coordinators for race/ethnicity, religion, LGBTQ+, and gender within the OCR. The duties of those coordinators were not specified, and the statute stated the intent of the Legislature to specify those duties in subsequent legislation. This bill specifies those duties, adds a Disability Discrimination Prevention Coordinator and an Anti-Native American Discrimination Deputy Coordinator, and establishes other deputies under the Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Coordinator. The duties and responsibilities of the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator are not amended by this bill.

According to the Author

"Last year, working with my Diversity caucus colleagues- the California Black Legislative Caucus, AAPI Legislative Caucus, and LGBTQ Legislative Caucus- 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, at the request of the local educational agency, technical assistance so 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."

Arguments in Support

Jewish California writes, "Discrimination in California's schools violates our most sacred commitments to justice and human dignity. Students of every faith, race, gender identity, and sexual orientation deserve to learn in environments free from discrimination and hostility. SB

998 outlines the responsibilities of the Religious Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, the Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, the Gender Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, and the LGBTQ+ Discrimination Prevention Coordinator. The bill also creates a new Disability Discrimination Prevention Coordinator and delineates its responsibilities.

Additionally, the bill creates new Deputy Coordinators on anti-black racism, anti-Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) racism, and anti-Latino racism that will work under the Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator.

The coordinators will work with local educational agencies to develop policies, provide staff training, and support students who experience discrimination. This builds on AB 715 (Zbur, Addis) – a bill we sponsored last year – which created the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator and outlined its responsibilities, and SB 48 (Gonzalez), which established the other four coordinators but did not identify their specific roles. By clarifying these coordinators' explicit responsibilities, SB 998 ensures that California's schools have the infrastructure and support to proactively address discrimination.

SB 998 strengthens school climates by ensuring that every student – regardless of religion, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability status – experiences a welcoming, affirming educational environment."

Arguments in Opposition

BUSD Jewish Parents for Collective Liberation writes, "Given the current political climate and the way that accusations of discrimination (particularly antisemitism) are currently being used for political control of educational institutions in K-12 and higher education, we strongly oppose any legislation that would make any civil rights coordinator a political appointment.

These appointments should be qualified civil servants based on competence, qualifications, and competitive examinations.

As Jewish parents, we will continue to oppose any legislation that might allow politicians to use accusations of antisemitism for political gains rather than to support our students."

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

- 1) One-time General Fund costs of \$2.46 million and \$1.96 million annually ongoing for GovOps to provide for the new Discrimination Prevention Coordinator positions, two additional administrative support staff positions, development of educational and training materials, and acquisition of new office space to support increased staffing.

AB 109 (Gabriel), Chapter 19, Statutes of 2026, includes provisional language authorizing the Director of Finance to appropriate up to \$3.581 million to GovOps to support implementation of this bill.

- 2) Minor and absorbable costs to CDE though CDE contends that its specific role and expectations as a consulting entity to the OCR is unclear.

VOTES**SENATE FLOOR: 30-7-3**

YES: Allen, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Cortese, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Hurtado, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Umberg, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

NO: Alvarado-Gil, Choi, Dahle, Grove, Jones, Seyarto, Strickland

ABS, ABST OR NV: Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Valladares

ASM EDUCATION: 6-0-3

YES: Patel, Ahrens, Bonta, Garcia, Lowenthal, Pellerin

ABS, ABST OR NV: Hoover, Castillo, Zbur

ASM JUDICIARY: 9-3-0

YES: Kalra, Bauer-Kahan, Bryan, Connolly, Harabedian, Pacheco, Papan, Stefani, Zbur

NO: Macedo, Dixon, Sanchez

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-1-3

YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache

NO: Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Hoover, Dixon, Ta

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