

Date of Hearing: June 17, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Darshana R. Patel, Chair

SB 998 (Gonzalez) – As Amended June 9, 2026

[This bill was double referred to the Assembly Committee on Judiciary and may be heard by that Committee on issues under its jurisdiction.]

SENATE VOTE: 30-7

SUBJECT: Educational equity: discrimination prevention coordinators

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. Specifically, **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.
- 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:
 - a) Develop, consult on, and provide religious discrimination related education to teachers, staff, governing board and body members, administrators, and other local educational agency (LEA) personnel to identify and proactively prevent religious discrimination;
 - b) Provide technical assistance, upon the request of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), a school district superintendent, a county superintendent of schools, or the governing board or body of an LEA, to LEAs to access restorative justice resources, training, and practitioners by doing both of the following:
 - i) Ensure educators receive guidance and professional development recommendations to equip educators with the skills to navigate challenging conversations while fostering safe spaces for teaching and learning; and
 - ii) Create a list of resources and identify available trainings that LEAs may share with teachers, administrators, and LEA personnel in their educator preparation programs, including, but not limited to, the best practices that the CDE has made available.
 - c) Engage with LEAs to ensure administrators are equipped to address conflicts at an early stage with the goal of proactively resolving incidents pertaining to religious discrimination;

- d) Provide information on training courses on cultural competency and positive school climate to teachers, administrators, and LEA personnel. The training courses may include, but not be limited to, any of the following topics:
 - i) Nondiscrimination laws;
 - ii) Trauma-informed restorative practices;
 - iii) Bullying prevention and response;
 - iv) Navigating politically charged environments; and
 - v) Implementing inclusive curriculum.
 - e) Beginning September 1, 2027, track and report 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. Requires that the reports not include any personally identifiable information;
 - f) Track and report complaints and resolutions, or lack of resolutions of complaints relating to anti-Muslim discrimination;
 - g) Engage with relevant community stakeholders to address high-priority issues in the prevention of unlawful religious discrimination; and
 - h) Make recommendations, in coordination with the executive director of the SBE, to the Legislature, on legislation necessary for the prevention of religious discrimination in educational settings.
- 4) Requires the Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, in consultation with the CDE, and under the supervision of the GovOps, to do all of the following:
- a) Develop, consult on, and provide culturally competent race and ethnicity discrimination education to teachers, staff, governing board and body members, administrators, and other LEA personnel to identify and proactively prevent race and ethnicity discrimination;
 - b) Provide technical assistance, upon the request of the SPI, a school district superintendent, a county superintendent of schools, or the governing board or body of a LEA, to LEAs to access restorative justice resources, training, and practitioners by doing both of the following:
 - i) Ensure educators receive guidance and professional development recommendations to equip educators with the skills to navigate challenging conversations while fostering safe spaces for teaching and learning; and

- ii) Create a list of resources and identify available training that LEAs may share with teachers, administrators, and LEA personnel in their educator preparation programs, including, but not limited to, the best practices that the CDE has made available.
 - c) Engage with LEAs to ensure administrators are equipped to address conflicts at an early stage, with the goal of proactively resolving incidents pertaining to race and ethnicity discrimination;
 - d) Provide information on training courses on cultural competency and positive school climate to teachers, administrators, and LEA personnel. The training courses may include, but not be limited to, any of the following topics:
 - i) Nondiscrimination laws;
 - ii) Trauma-informed restorative practices;
 - iii) Bullying prevention and response;
 - iv) Navigating politically charged environments; and
 - v) Implementing inclusive curriculum.
 - e) Beginning September 1, 2027, track and report 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;
 - f) Track and report complaints and resolutions or lack of resolutions of complaints relating to anti-immigrant discrimination;
 - g) Requires that the reports not include any personally identifiable information;
 - h) Engage with relevant community stakeholders to address high-priority issues in the prevention of unlawful racial and ethnic discrimination; and
 - i) Make recommendations, in coordination with the executive director of the SBE, to the Legislature, on legislation necessary for the prevention of racial and ethnic discrimination in educational settings.
- 5) Requires the OCR to employ a Deputy Coordinator on Anti-Black Racism, who shall report directly to the Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator.
- 6) Requires the Deputy Coordinator on Anti-Black Racism to do all of the following:
- a) Make recommendations, in coordination with the executive director of the SBE, to the Legislature, on legislation necessary for the prevention of anti-Blackness-related incidents or educational disparities;
 - b) Work with the leadership of the OCR to develop a dedicated internet webpage with resources and information accessible to support Black pupils and LEA personnel;

- c) Annually report statistics on anti-Black racism against pupils and LEA personnel with suggestions on how to prevent anti-Black racism at the root of the problem;
 - d) Provide information on available training courses that focus on the history and contemporary context of anti-Black racism within society and in educational settings; and
 - e) Engage with Black education-specific organizations when receiving feedback to address anti-Black racism.
- 7) Requires the OCR to employ a Deputy Coordinator on Anti-Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (Anti-AANHPI) Discrimination, who shall report directly to the Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator.
- 8) Requires the Deputy Coordinator on Anti-AANHPI Discrimination to do all of the following:
- a) Make recommendations, in coordination with the executive director of the SBE, to the Legislature on legislation necessary for the prevention of Anti-AANHPI-related incidents or educational disparities;
 - b) Work with the leadership of the OCR to develop a dedicated internet webpage with resources and information accessible to support Asian American and Pacific Islander pupils and LEA personnel;
 - c) Annually report statistics on Anti-AANHPI discrimination against pupils and LEA personnel with suggestions on how to prevent Anti-AANHPI discrimination at the root of the problem;
 - d) Provide information on available training courses that focus on the history and contemporary context of Anti-AANHPI discrimination within society and in educational settings; and
 - e) Engage with Asian American and Pacific Islander education-specific organizations when receiving feedback to address Anti-AANHPI discrimination.
- 9) Requires the OCR to employ a Deputy Coordinator on Anti-Latino Discrimination, who shall report directly to the Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator.
- 10) Requires the Deputy Coordinator on Anti-Latino Discrimination to do all of the following:
- a) Make recommendations, in coordination with the executive director of the SBE, to the Legislature on legislation necessary for the prevention of anti-Latino-related incidents or educational disparities;
 - b) Work with the leadership of the OCR to develop a dedicated internet webpage with resources and information accessible to support 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-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-Latino discrimination within society and in educational settings; and
 - e) Engage with Latino education-specific organizations when receiving feedback to address anti-Latino discrimination.
- 11) Requires the Gender Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, in consultation with the CDE, and under the supervision of the GovOps, to do all of the following:
- a) Develop, consult on, and provide gender-related discrimination education to teachers, staff, governing board and body members, administrators, and other LEA personnel to identify and proactively prevent gender discrimination;
 - b) Provide technical assistance, upon the request of the SPI, a school district superintendent, a county superintendent of schools, or the governing board or body of a LEA, to LEAs to access restorative justice resources, training, and practitioners by doing both of the following:
 - i) Ensure educators receive guidance and professional development recommendations to equip educators with the skills to navigate challenging conversations while fostering safe spaces for teaching and learning.
 - ii) Create a list of resources and identify available training that LEAs may share with teachers, administrators, and LEA personnel in their educator preparation programs, including, but not limited to, the best practices that the CDE has made available.
 - c) Engage with LEAs to ensure administrators are equipped to address conflicts at an early stage with the goal of proactively resolving incidents pertaining to gender discrimination;
 - d) Provide information on training courses on cultural competency and positive school climate to teachers, administrators, and LEA personnel. The training courses may include, but not be limited to, any of the following topics:
 - i) Nondiscrimination laws;
 - ii) Trauma-informed restorative practices;
 - iii) Bullying prevention and response;
 - iv) Navigating politically charged environments; and
 - v) Implementing inclusive curriculum.
 - e) Beginning September 1, 2027, track and report to the Legislature, the executive director of the SBE, and the SPI complaints and resolutions or lack of resolutions of complaints

made pursuant relating to gender discrimination in all LEAs serving pupils in TK-12th grade;

- f) Requires that the reports not include any personally identifiable information;
 - g) Engage with relevant community stakeholders to address high-priority issues in the prevention of unlawful gender discrimination; and
 - h) Make recommendations, in coordination with the executive director of the SBE, to the Legislature, on legislation necessary for the prevention of gender discrimination in educational settings.
- 12) Requires the LGBTQ+ Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, in consultation with the CDE, and under the supervision of the GovOps, to do all of the following:
- a) Develop, consult on, and provide LGBTQ+ related discrimination education to teachers, staff, governing board and body members, administrators, and other LEA personnel to identify and proactively prevent LGBTQ+ discrimination;
 - b) Provide technical assistance, upon the request of the SPI, a school district superintendent, a county superintendent of schools, or the governing board or body of a LEA, to LEAs to access restorative justice resources, training, and practitioners by doing both of the following:
 - i) Ensure educators receive guidance and professional development recommendations to equip educators with the skills to navigate challenging conversations while fostering safe spaces for teaching and learning.
 - ii) Create a list of resources and identify available training that LEAs may share with teachers, administrators, and LEA personnel in their educator preparation programs, including, but not limited to, the best practices that the CDE has made available.
 - c) Engage with LEAs to ensure administrators are equipped to address conflicts at an early stage with the goal of proactively resolving incidents pertaining to LGBTQ+ discrimination;
 - d) Provide available information on training courses on cultural competency and positive school climate training, including, but not limited to, Providing Relevant, Inclusive Support that Matters (PRISM) training, for teachers, administrators, and other LEA personnel. The training courses may include, but not be limited to, any of the following topics:
 - i) Nondiscrimination laws;
 - ii) Trauma-informed restorative practices;
 - iii) Bullying prevention and response;
 - iv) Navigating politically charged environments; and

- v) Implementing inclusive curriculum.
 - e) Beginning September 1, 2027, track and report to the Legislature, the executive director of the SBE, and the SPI complaints and resolutions or lack of resolutions of complaints relating to LGBTQ+ discrimination in all LEAs serving pupils in TK-12th grade;
 - f) Requires that the reports not include any personally identifiable information;
 - g) Engage with relevant community stakeholders, including, but not limited to, organizations that support the LGBTQ+ community, organizations that support LGBTQ+ youth, LGBTQ+ parent groups, and organizations that support transgender, gender nonbinary, and intersex youth, to address high-priority issues in the prevention of unlawful LGBTQ+ discrimination; and
 - h) Make recommendations, in coordination with the executive director of the SBE, to the Legislature, on legislation necessary for the prevention of LGBTQ+ discrimination in educational settings.
- 13) Requires the OCR to employ a Disability Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, who shall be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.
- 14) Requires the Disability Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, in consultation with the CDE, and under the supervision of the GovOps, to do all of the following:
- a) Develop, consult on, and provide disability-related discrimination education to teachers, staff, governing board and body members, administrators, and other LEA personnel to identify and proactively prevent disability discrimination;
 - b) Provide technical assistance, upon the request of the SPI, a school district superintendent, a county superintendent of schools, or the governing board or body of a LEA, to LEAs to access restorative justice resources, training, and practitioners by doing both of the following:
 - i) Ensure educators receive guidance and professional development recommendations to equip educators with the skills to navigate challenging conversations while fostering safe spaces for teaching and learning.
 - ii) Create a list of resources and identify available training that LEAs may share with teachers, administrators, and LEA personnel in their educator preparation programs, including, but not limited to, the best practices that the CDE has made available.
 - c) Engage with LEAs to ensure administrators are equipped to address conflicts at an early stage with the goal of proactively resolving incidents pertaining to disability discrimination;
 - d) Provide information on training courses on cultural competency and positive school climate to teachers, administrators, and LEA personnel. The training courses may include, but not be limited to, any of the following topics:

- i) Nondiscrimination laws;
 - ii) Trauma-informed restorative practices;
 - iii) Bullying prevention and response;
 - iv) Navigating politically charged environments; and
 - v) Implementing inclusive curriculum.
- e) Beginning September 1, 2027, track and report 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;
 - f) Requires that the reports not include any personally identifiable information;
 - g) Engage with relevant community stakeholders, including, but not limited to, organizations that support the disability community, organizations that support pupils and youth with disabilities, organizations that support parents and guardians of pupils with disabilities and their families, to address high-priority issues in the prevention of unlawful disability discrimination; and
 - h) Make recommendations, in coordination with the executive director of the SBE, to the Legislature, on legislation necessary for the prevention of disability discrimination in educational settings.
- 15) Repeals a statement of intent to enact the duties and responsibilities of the discrimination prevention coordinators.

EXISTING LAW:

Federal law:

- 1) Provides that, in part, “no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program of activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Enforcement of compliance is initiated upon the filing of a complaint alleging a violation of Title IX. (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, United States Code (USC) 1681 et seq.)
- 2) The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) be made available to individuals with exceptional needs. (20 USC 1400 et seq.)
- 3) Authorizes a parent or an LEA to file a due process complaint relating to the identification, evaluation or educational placement of a child with a disability, or the provision of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE). (20 USC 1415)

- 4) Requires each school district and county office of education (COE), or a local public or private agency that receives funding from the state or federal government, to designate a person to serve as the Title IX compliance coordinator to enforce compliance at the local level, including coordinating any complaints of non-compliance. (34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 106.8(a))

State law:

- 5) 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. (EC 33803.2-33803.5.)
- 6) 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 (EC) 200)
- 7) 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. (EC 220)
- 8) Requires the CDE to monitor adherence to federal and state non-discrimination laws in any program or activity conducted by an educational institution as part of its regular monitoring and review of LEAs, commonly known as the Categorical Program Monitoring process. Existing law requires CDE to assess whether LEAs have taken specified actions relative to anti-discrimination policies, complaint and investigation processes, documentation, protection from retaliation, and identification of the responsible LEA officer for ensuring compliance. (EC 234 et seq.)
- 9) Provides that the governing board of a school district has the primary responsibility for ensuring that school district programs and activities are free from discrimination based on age and characteristics protected pursuant to the Penal Code, and for monitoring compliance with any and all rules and regulations. (EC 260)
- 10) Requires the SPI to establish and implement a system of complaint processing, known as the Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP), for specified educational programs. (EC 3315)
- 11) Requires an 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. (EC 33315)

- 12) Establishes the OCR under the administration of the 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. (EC 3801)
- 13) Requires that a complaint alleging violations of the IDEA be investigated in an expeditious and effective manner in accordance with applicable federal law. (EC 56500.2)
- 14) Requires that a written decision be issued to the complainant in accordance with the 60-day time limit. (EC 56500.2)
- 15) Requires the party filing the complaint to forward a copy of the complaint to the LEA or public agency serving the child at the same time the party files the complaint with the CDE. (EC 56500.2)
- 16) Requires the SPI to develop a model form to assist parents and public agencies in filing a state complaint under this section. (EC 56500.2)
- 17) Requires the OCR, in consultation with the 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 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. (EC 33802)
- 18) Establishes the position of the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator, subject to appointment by the Governor and confirmation by the Senate. (EC 33803.1)
- 19) 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 to teachers, staff, governing board or body members, administrators, and other LEA personnel to identify and proactively prevent antisemitism; make 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. (EC 33803.1)
- 20) Requires the CDE, by October 1 each year, to issue a management bulletin to all LEAs describing protections and responsibilities regarding prohibitions against unlawful discrimination, as specified. (EC 280)

21) Requires the SPI, in consultation with the executive director of the SBE and the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator, to develop and maintain a distinct internet web page containing resources and information specific to antisemitism on its internet website. (EC 280)

FISCAL EFFECT: 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.

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. The author states, “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.”

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 establishes various deputies under the Race and

Ethnicity Discrimination Coordinator. The duties and responsibilities of the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator are not amended by this bill.

Differences between coordinator positions and the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator. AB 715 (Zbur), Chapter 428, Statutes of 2025, established the OCR and the Antisemitism Coordinator. The duties and responsibilities of the discrimination prevention coordinators established by this bill largely mirror those of the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator, with a few exceptions.

AB 715 requires that if the SPI determines, pursuant to a complaint filed directly or on appeal to the SPI, that a violation of antidiscrimination law involves antisemitism, that any requirement to develop and implement an improvement plan be created in consultation with the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator. This is not a role proposed for the other discrimination prevention coordinators.

Additionally, as noted by the Senate Education Committee, there are two roles given to the OCR, rather than a particular coordinator. These include:

- 1) Authorization for the newly outlined coordinators to provide technical assistance to LEAs to access restorative justice resources, training, and practitioners--upon the request of the SPI, a school district superintendent, a county superintendent of schools, or the governing board or body of an LEA; and
- 2) Authorization for the newly outlined coordinators to provide information on training courses on cultural competency and positive school climate to teachers, administrators, and LEA personnel.

Federal law makes the CDE the entity responsible for the enforcement of special education law. The Disability Prevention Coordinator's duties must not overlap or conflict with CDE's role. Federal law vests responsibility for monitoring and enforcing multiple education statutes to state education agencies (SEAs). In California, the CDE is the state agency responsible for ensuring compliance with state and federal civil rights laws and regulations. To do so, the CDE maintains an Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO), which conducts compliance activities related to:

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the implementation of 28 CFR, Part 35; and
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and implementing regulations (34 CFR, Part 104), which prohibit discrimination on the basis of handicap.

Under federal law, the CDE is also responsible for the enforcement of special education law as prescribed by the IDEA. The IDEA is both an education law and a civil rights law. Enforcing compliance with special education law is a complex function involving a significant portion of the staff of the CDE Special Education Division and significant local staffing resources. The CDE also undertakes activities to prevent violations of the IDEA, which could be viewed as the prevention of discrimination against students with disabilities.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE), "Disability harassment that adversely affects an elementary or secondary student's education may also be a denial of [free, appropriate

public education] FAPE under the IDEA, as well as Section 504 and Title II...Harassment of a student based on disability may decrease the student's ability to benefit from his or her education and amount to a denial of FAPE.” The USDOE notes that “Parents may initiate administrative due process procedures under IDEA, Section 504, or Title II to address a denial of FAPE, including a denial that results from disability harassment.”

This bill proposes to establish a Disability Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, who would be responsible for working with LEAs to prevent discrimination on the basis of disability. ***The Committee may wish to consider that*** it is not clear which statutes would guide the work of this Coordinator, and that since discrimination against students with disabilities can constitute a violation of the IDEA, this lack of clarity could result in duplication, conflict, and confusion if the Disability Discrimination Prevention Coordinator viewed their responsibilities to overlap with those of the CDE.

Native American Deputy Coordinator position. This bill would establish Deputy Coordinator positions under the Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator for Anti-Black Racism, Anti-AANHPI Discrimination, and Anti-Latino Discrimination, all of whom would report directly to the Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator. It does not establish a Deputy Coordinator position on Anti-Native American discrimination.

Recommended amendments. Staff recommends that the bill be amended to:

- 1) Establish a Deputy Coordinator for Anti-Native American Discrimination Prevention, with duties aligned to those of the other coordinators, and including, in the provision relating to the reporting of complaints, existing law related to the wearing of tribal regalia at graduation ceremonies, and the use of derogatory Native American terms for school or athletic team names, mascots, or nicknames.
- 2) Clarify that the measure does not alter the responsibilities of the CDE under the IDEA and its implementing regulations.
- 3) Remove the requirement and related recommendations for a separate report on complaints of discrimination against one religious group, and instead require that the report on religious discrimination complaints be disaggregated by religious groups in California. Also include a statement of Legislative intent that this 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.

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.”

Prior legislation. AB 2615 (Zbur and Addis) of the 2025-26 Session would make changes to requirements regarding instruction, instructional materials, and complaints, including requiring the SPI, when instructional materials are found to be discriminatory, to ensure that LEAs omit all violating portions of the instructional materials; removing requirements that instruction and instructional materials be consistent with accepted standards of professional responsibility; and modifying requirements regarding factual accuracy of instruction and instructional materials.

SB 48 (Gonzalez) Chapter 429, Statutes of 2025, requires the OCR under GovOps to employ a Religious Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, a Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, a Gender Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, and an LGBTQ Discrimination Prevention Coordinator. Requires that these positions all be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.

AB 715 (Zbur), Chapter 428, Statutes of 2025, establishes the OCR under the administration of GovOps and the position of Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator within OCR; requires LEAs that know or have reason to know that instructional or professional development materials were used that violate existing anti-discrimination laws to investigate and remediate the action; requires instruction and instructional materials to be factually accurate, align with the adopted curriculum and existing standards for instructional materials, and be consistent with accepted standards of professional responsibility; authorizes the CDE to require specified corrective action be taken by LEAs; and requires specified corrective action be taken by organizations contracted

to provide instructional or professional development materials if those materials are found to violate specified provisions of this bill.

SB 1421 (Stern) of the 2023-24 Session would have required the CDE to establish the OCR within the CDE to receive and investigate complaints reported through the UCP that allege unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying; to assume the CDE's duties as it pertains to these complaints; and to develop procedures to optimize complaint reporting and response. This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 1078 (Jackson), Chapter 229, Statutes of 2023, among other things, requires the CDE to issue guidance related to how to help school districts, COEs, charter schools, and school personnel manage conversations about race and gender, and how to review instructional materials to ensure that they represent diverse perspectives and are culturally relevant.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Agudath Israel of California
American Jewish Committee - Los Angeles
American Jewish Committee - San Diego
American Jewish Committee - Northern California
Association of California School Administrators
Beverly Hills Synagogue
California Legislative LGBTQ Caucus
California State PTA
Democrats for Israel Los Angeles
Disability Rights California
Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.
Hillel of San Diego
Holocaust Museum LAJCC - Federation of San Luis Obispo
Jewish Community Relations Council - Bay Area
Jewish Community Relations Council - Santa Barbara County
Jewish Community Relations Council - Jewish Long Beach
Jewish California
Jewish Center for Justice
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Democratic Club of Marin
Jewish Family Service Los Angeles
Jewish Family Service of San Diego
Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley
Jewish Federation Bay Area
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 Free Loan Association
Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation

JFCS Long Beach and Orange County
National Council of Jewish Women – San Francisco
Valley Beth Shalom

Opposition

1021 Jewish Workers for Justice
1021 Members for Palestine
Beyt Tikkun: A Synagogue Without Walls
Jewish Parents for Collective Liberation

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