LCW 2025

# PRIVATE EDUCATION LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

This is a compilation of bills, presented by subject, which were signed into law and have an impact on the employment, student, and business related issues of our clients. Unless the bills were considered urgency legislation (which means they went into effect the day they were signed), bills primarily take effect on January 1, 2026, unless indicated otherwise. Urgency legislation will also be identified as such. Several of the bills summarized below apply directly to independent and private schools, colleges and universities. Bills that do not directly apply are presented either because they indirectly apply, may set new standards that apply or would generally be of interest to our independent and private education clients.

## INDEX

# EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTED CONDUCT

### *SB 303 — Bias Mitigation Training.*

The Civil Rights Department (CRD) enforces the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA), which prohibits employment and housing discrimination based on protected characteristics. CRD investigates complaints, pursues enforcement actions, and seeks to eliminate unlawful practices.

Employers provide bias mitigation or elimination training in order to educate employees on understanding, recognizing, and acknowledging bias, including employees' own personal biases, and their impact in the workplace. SB 303 provides that an employee's assessment, testing, admission, or acknowledgment of their own personal biases that is made in good faith and solicited or required as part of a bias mitigation training does not, by itself, constitute unlawful discrimination.

*(SB 303 adds Section 12940.2 to the Government Code.)*

### *AB 406 — Prohibition on Discrimination Against Victims of Violence Reinstated to Labor Code.*

The California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) prohibits employers from discriminating or retaliating against employees who take time off work due to jury service, court appearances, or circumstances related to qualifying acts of violence or crime. The FEHA currently authorizes the Civil Rights Department (CRD) to enforce these protections effective January 1, 2025, and provides rights related to leave, confidentiality, and reasonable accommodation for affected employees.

Until January 1, 2025, the Labor Code set forth the statutory prohibitions on discrimination or retaliation against an employee who took time off of work for the above purposes. During that time, the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE) had authority to enforce these provisions. However, as of January 1, 2025, these Labor Code provisions were repealed and replaced by the provisions in the Government Code (under FEHA, as noted above) prohibiting discrimination or retaliation against an employee who is a victim or whose family member is a victim of qualifying acts of violence.

AB 406 reinstates the prior Labor Code provisions that governed employee rights to take leave or request accommodations as victims of crime, applying those provisions on a limited basis to alleged violations that occurred on or before December 31, 2024. AB 406 adds a sunset clause to the reinstated Labor Code provisions such that they are repealed January 1, 2035.

AB 406 also transfers enforcement responsibilities for the reinstated Labor Code provisions from the DLSE to the CRD to maintain consistency in enforcement.

AB 406 also updates the paid sick leave law in Labor Code Section 246.5 to reflect the transition from Labor Code to Government Code provisions, clarifying that victims of violence may use paid sick leave for qualifying absences.

AB 406 took effect immediately on October 1, 2025, as urgency legislation.

*(AB 406 amends Section 12945.8 of the Government Code, amends Section 246.5, amends and repeals Sections 230.2 and 230.5, and adds Sections 230 and 230.1 of the Labor Code.)*

### *SB 513 — Personnel Records Related to Education and Training.*

The Labor Code grants current and former employees, or their representative, the right to inspect and receive a copy of personnel records maintained by an employer relating to the employee's performance and to records regarding any grievance concerning the employee. Existing law requires the employer to make the contents of those personnel records available for inspection, as specified, and makes it a crime for an employer to violate these requirements.

SB 513 adds any records maintained by the employer that relate to employee education and training to the type of personnel records subject to inspection. SB 513 requires that an employer that maintains such education and training records ensure those records include: (1) the name of the employee; (2) the name of the training provider; (3) the duration and date of the training; (4) the core competencies of the training, including skills in equipment or software; and (5) the resulting certification or qualification.

*(SB 513 amends Section 1198.5 of the Labor Code.)*

### *SB 294 — The Workplace Know Your Rights Act.*

The Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE), within the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), enforces state labor laws.

SB 294 creates the Workplace Know Your Rights Act under the Labor Code, which requires employers to provide a stand-alone written notice to each current employee about specified workers' rights.

Employers must provide such notice on or before February 1, 2026 and annually thereafter.

Employers must provide notice to all current employees, new hires, and any authorized representatives describing the following rights:

1. Rights to workers' compensation benefits and contact information for the Division of Workers Compensation.
2. The right to notice of immigration agency inspections.
3. Protection from unfair immigration-related practices.
4. The right to organize or join a union and engage in concerted activities.
5. Constitutional rights when interacting with law enforcement at the workplace, including protections against unreasonable searches and self-incrimination.

Employers may provide the notice by personal service, regular mail, email, text, or another method that can be reasonably anticipated to be received within one business day.

SB 294 requires employers to issue the notice in the language normally used to communicate with employees, and to maintain compliance records for three years. The Labor Commissioner must create and post a template notice by January 1, 2026, that will include other legal developments that the Labor Commissioner deems relevant, update the template annually, and make it available in multiple languages.

SB 294 also requires that, by March 30, 2026, employers provide employees the opportunity to name an emergency contact and to indicate whether they would like the employer to notify the contact if the employee is arrested or detained on their worksite, or during work hours or during the performance of the employee's job duties, but not on the worksite, if the employer has actual knowledge of the arrest or detention of the employee. SB 294 requires that employers must provide employees the opportunity to update their emergency contact at any time.

SB 294 prohibits retaliation or discrimination against employees who exercise or attempt to exercise their rights under the Workplace Know Your Rights Act. The Labor Commissioner and public prosecutors may enforce the law, and employers who violate it may face penalties of up to $500 per employee per violation per day, up to $10,000 per employee for violations of the emergency contact provisions of the Workplace Know Your Rights Act. The law permits waiver through a collective bargaining agreement only if clearly stated, and allows local ordinances to provide greater employee protections.

*(SB 294 adds Part 5.6 (commencing with Section 1550) to Division 2 of the Labor Code.)*

### *SB 477 — California Civil Rights Department Enforcement Procedures.*

The Civil Rights Department (CRD) enforces the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA), which prohibits employment and housing discrimination based on protected characteristics. CRD investigates complaints, pursues enforcement actions, and seeks to eliminate unlawful practices.

Effective January 1, 2026, SB 477 clarifies FEHA's enforcement procedures regarding complaint processing, deadlines, and right-to-sue provisions. SB 477 provides a statutory definition for the term "group or class complaint," which means a complaint that alleges a pattern or practice of discrimination. SB 477 notes that the definition is declaratory and reflects existing law.

SB 477 clarifies the CRD's deadline to issue a right-to-sue notice shall be no later than one year for an individual complaint and two years for a group or class complaint.

SB 477 directs CRD to issue a right-to-sue notice to a complainant whose complaint relates to a complaint filed in the name of the director or a group or class complaint upon request by the person claiming to be aggrieved or, if the person claiming to be aggrieved does not request such notice, after the complaint has been fully and finally disposed of and all related proceedings, actions and appeals conclude.

SB 477 tolls (pauses) the time to file a civil action when a complainant timely appeals the closure of a complaint by CRD, signs a written agreement with CRD, or CRD extends the complaint investigation period due to a petition to compel cooperation.

*(SB 477 amends Sections 12926, 12960, 12965, and 12981 of the Government Code.)*

### *AB 288 — Expands PERB's Jurisdiction Related to Employees in Positions Covered by the NLRA.*

Existing law establishes the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB), a state agency that oversees labor relations of most public employers and employees and that has the power to investigate an unfair practice charge and determine the appropriate remedy for the unfair practice.

Existing law, the federal National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), regulates unfair labor practices on the part of employers and labor organizations in the private sector and provides the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) the power to conduct elections to determine employee representatives and to prevent unfair labor practices.

AB 288 expands PERB's jurisdiction to allow a worker employed in a position subject to the NLRA to petition PERB to enforce certain rights in specified circumstances. In particular, AB 288 allows workers to petition PERB to process a representation petition, certify an exclusive bargaining representative, or to decide unfair labor practices, if they are employed in a position that is or would have been subject to the NLRA and either:

1. They lose coverage because the NLRA is repealed or narrowed or its enforcement is enjoined; or

2. The NLRB cedes jurisdiction.

AB 288 provides that the NLRB will be deemed to have ceded jurisdiction in the following three circumstances:

1. For cases where a certification of the results of an election have been issued or where challenges or objections to a representation election are pending before the NLRB: The NLRB will be deemed to have ceded jurisdiction (i) when it lacks a quorum; (ii) if the Supreme Court finds its members are unconstitutionally protected from removal; or (iii) when the continued processing of a case is enjoined based on constitutional challenges to its structure or authority.

2. For cases where no certification, complaint, or decision has been issued: The NLRB will be deemed to have ceded jurisdiction where the worker's case has been pending for more than six (6) months without the issuance of a certification, complaint, or decision.

3. For cases on review or exception: The NLRB will be deemed to have ceded jurisdiction when the case remains pending before it for more than twelve (12) months without the issuance of a final decision.

AB 288 further provides that a worker pursuing relief from PERB must file an unfair practice charge that includes contact information for the charging party and respondent and, where applicable, the original charge or petition and supporting documentation filed with the NLRB. This documentation will not be deemed to be a public record for purposes of the Public Records Act.

Finally, AB 288 provides that PERB may order any appropriate remedy to implement AB 288 and may assess civil penalties in the amount of a $1,000 per worker per violation if it finds that an employer has engaged in a pattern or practice of committing unfair practices.

*(AB 288 adds Section 923.1 to the Labor Code.)*

## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS & WAGE AND HOUR

### *SB 590 — Leave for Designated Persons Under Paid Family Leave.*

The Unemployment Insurance Code established the Paid Family Leave Program that provides for wage replacement benefits for up to eight (8) weeks for workers who take time off work for prescribed purposes, including to care for a seriously ill family member.

Effective July 1, 2028, SB 590 expands eligibility for benefits under the Paid Family Leave Program to include individuals who take time off work to care for a "designated person" who is seriously ill. SB 590 defines designated person to mean any care recipient related by blood or whose association with the individual is the equivalent of a family relationship, and makes conforming changes to the definitions of the terms "family care leave" and "family member."

SB 590 requires an individual that requests benefits pursuant to the Paid Family Leave Program to care for a designated person for the first time to identify the designated person and, under penalty of perjury, attest to how the individual is related by blood to the designated person, or how the individual's association with the designated person is the equivalent of a family relationship.

*(SB 590 amends Sections 3301, 3302, and 3303 of the Unemployment Insurance Code.)*

### *SB 261 — Enforcement of DLSE Judgments Against an Employer.*

The Labor Code authorizes the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE) under the Labor Commissioner (Commissioner) to enforce California's labor laws, investigate wage claims, and issue orders, decisions, and awards for unpaid wages. When a judgment becomes final, the Commissioner or a judgment creditor may collect the amount owed and recover attorney's fees and costs spent for enforcing the judgment. If a final

judgment against an employer remains unsatisfied after specified periods of time, such as for 30 days, the Commissioner may take enforcement actions including barring the employer from conducting business in the state.

SB 261 requires a court to impose a civil penalty of up to three times the unpaid judgment amount, including post-judgment interest, when an employer fails to pay a final judgment for unpaid wages 180 days after the appeal period ends and no appeal is pending.

SB 261 directs courts to impose the full penalty unless the employer demonstrates by clear and convincing evidence good cause to reduce the penalty. Courts must distribute penalties 50 percent to the affected employees and 50 percent to the DLSE for enforcement and education purposes.

*(SB 261 amends Section 98.2 and adds Sections 238.05 and 238.10 to the Labor Code.)*

### *SB 809 — Employment Status and Reimbursement Rules for Vehicle Use.*

Courts apply the three-part "ABC" Test to determine whether a worker qualifies as an employee or an independent contractor in matters concerning wages and benefits. Under this test, a court evaluates whether the worker: (1) operates independently of the hiring entity's control; (2) performs work outside the usual course of the hiring entity's business; and (3) engages in an independently established trade, occupation, or business.

Additionally, the Labor Code requires employers to reimburse employees, but not independent contractors, for necessary expenditures incurred in the course of employment.

SB 809 clarifies that existing law does not consider ownership of a vehicle used to perform labor or services for compensation, whether personal or commercial, as determinative of a worker's status as an independent contractor.

SB 809 further clarifies that the Labor Code provision requiring employers to reimburse employees for necessary work-related expenditures includes costs associated with the use of personal and commercial vehicles. In the context of construction trucking, SB 809 requires employers to reimburse employees who are commercial drivers and who own their trucks, tractors, or trailers for expenses related to use, maintenance, and depreciation.

Employers and employees who drive personal and commercial vehicles, or the labor union that represents such employees, must negotiate reimbursement rates. Such reimbursement rate may be established as either a flat rate or per-mile rate, but not less than either the actual expenses incurred by the employee or the standard mileage rate set by the Internal Revenue Service.

*(SB 809 adds Sections 2750.9, 2775.5, and 2802.2 to the Labor Code.)*

### *SB 642 — Pay Scale and Wage Ranges.*

The Labor Code requires employers to provide applicants, upon request, a pay scale of range of wages the employer reasonably expects to pay for a position and to include that information in job postings if the employer employs more than 15 employees. The Labor Code also prohibits employers from paying employees at rates less than those paid to employees of the opposite sex or of another race or ethnicity for substantially similar work, except under specific circumstances.

Effective January 1, 2026, SB 642 updates the definition of "pay scale" to mean "a good-faith estimate of the expected salary or hourly wage range that an employer reasonably expects to pay for a position upon hire." Employers must continue to include the pay scale in job postings. SB 642 also replaces the phrase "opposite sex" with "another sex," clarifying that the law applies across all gender comparisons.

SB 642 extends the statute of limitations for filing a civil action for alleged violations from two to three years after the last date the cause of action occurs, allowing employees to seek relief for the entire period of a violation, up to six years. SB 642 specifies that a cause of action occurs under the following circumstances: (1) when an alleged unlawful compensation decision or practice is adopted; (2) when an individual becomes subject to the decision or practice; or (3) when an individual is affected by the application of the decision or practice.

*(SB 642 amends Sections 432.3 and 1197.5 of the Labor Code.)*

### *AB 692 — Prohibition on Employee Repayment Contract Provisions.*

Existing law declares that contracts restraining a person from engaging in a lawful profession, trade, or business are void as against public policy, except as expressly authorized.

Effective January 1, 2026, AB 692 prohibits employment contracts or work-related agreements that do the following: (1) require a worker to repay an employer, training provider, or debt collector if the worker's employment or work relationship ends; or (2) impose any penalty, fee, or cost as

a result of termination. AB 692 exempts certain repayment obligations under contract, including the following: (1) a governmental loan repayment or forgiveness program; (2) a tuition repayment for transferable educational credentials that satisfies certain conditions; (3) an approved apprenticeship program; (4) the receipt of discretionary or unearned monetary payment at the outset of employment (i.e., a signing bonus); and (5) the lease, financing, or purchase of residential property.

AB 692 authorizes an employee or their representative to bring a civil action to recover actual damages or $5,000 per affected employee, whichever is greater, as well as injunctive relief, attorney's fees, and costs. AB 692 specifies that these rights and remedies do not restrict other enforcement options under state law.

*(AB 692 adds Section 16608 to the Business and Professions Code and Section 926 to the Labor Code.)*

## WORKERS COMPENSATION

### *AB 1293 — Qualified Medical Evaluations.*

The Division of Workers' Compensation, through its Administrative Director, administers the Workers' Compensation system, which compensates employees for injuries that occur in the course of employment. The system provides procedures to resolve disputes about whether an injury is compensable and uses a qualified medical evaluator (QME) to conduct a comprehensive medical-legal evaluation addressing all contested medical issues in a claim. The law requires parties to send all communications with a panel QME before an evaluation in writing and to serve them on the opposing party 20 days in advance. The law also requires any later communication with the QME to be in writing and served on the opposing party when sent.

Effective January 1, 2027, AB 1293 will require the Administrative Director of the Division of Workers' Compensation to develop and make available a template QME report form that includes all required statutory and regulatory elements for a QME report. AB 1293 also requires the Administrative Director to develop and make available a medical evaluation request form for parties to use when communicating with a panel QME before an evaluation.

*(AB 1293 adds Section 4062.4 to the Labor Code.)*

## UNEMPLOYMENT

### *SB 617 — California Worker Adjustment and Retraining Act Notice Requirements.*

The California Worker Adjustment and Retraining Act (Cal/WARN Act) prohibits employers from ordering a mass layoff, relocation, or termination at a covered establishment without providing 60 days' written notice to affected employees, the Employment Development Department (EDD) and local government officials and workforce agencies.

SB 617 revises employers' notice requirements under the Cal/WARN Act. Employers will be required to state in the notice whether they plan to coordinate services, such as rapid response orientations through a local workforce development board, another entity, or no entity. SB 617 requires that the notice include a working email address and phone number for the local workforce development board and the following description of local rapid response services offered by the local workforce development board:

> "Local Workforce Development Boards and their partners help laid off workers find new jobs. Visit an America's Job Center of California location near you. You can get help with your resume, practice interviewing, search for jobs, and more. You can also learn about training programs to help start a new career."

If an employer chooses to coordinate services with the local workforce development board or another entity, the employer must arrange such services within 30 days of issuing the notice.

SB 617 also requires employers to include in the notice a description of the CalFresh program, the CalFresh benefits helpline, and a link to the CalFresh website.

SB 617 also requires employers to include in the notice a functioning email address and telephone number for the employer.

*(SB 617 amends Section 1401 of the Labor Code.)*

### *SB 854 — Mail and Electronically Transmitted Documents.*

The Unemployment Insurance Code governs the administration of unemployment and disability compensation programs and defines key terms used throughout the Code.

SB 854 standardizes the treatment of mailed and electronically transmitted documents throughout the Code by defining the terms "mail," "mailing," and "mailed" to include not only writings

transmitted through the United States Postal Service or another mail carrier, but also those sent by electronic transmission. For electronically transmitted documents, the bill specifies that the "postmark date" means the date the writing was sent.

*(SB 854 adds Section 22 to the Unemployment Insurance Code.)*

## MISCELLANEOUS EMPLOYMENT BILLS

### *SB 464 — Expands Civil Rights Department Pay Data Reporting Requirements.*

The Civil Rights Department (CRD) currently requires private employers with 100 or more employees to file an Annual Pay Data Report.

Existing law requires these reports to include the number of employees by race, ethnicity, and sex across 10 federal job categories, along with pay-band placement, median and mean hourly rates, and hours worked. Employers with 100 or more labor-contractor employees must also file separate reports. Courts had discretion to impose penalties if employers failed to comply.

SB 464 makes several significant changes. Employers must now keep demographic information collected for reporting separate from personnel records to ensure confidentiality. Beginning January 1, 2027, employers must also use 23 detailed occupational categories, such as executives, managers, educators, healthcare, construction, production, and transportation, instead of the current 10 broad Federal groupings. Courts must impose penalties when the CRD requests them: $100 per employee for the first failure to file and $200 per employee for each subsequent failure. Labor contractors that withhold necessary data also face penalties.

Employers with 100 or more employees must, beginning January 1, 2027, map positions to the new 23-category framework, keep demographic reporting data separate from personnel files, and prepare for mandatory penalties if they miss a filing.

*(SB 464 amends Section 12999 and adds section 12999.1 to the Government Code.)*

### *AB 487 — Blanket Insurance Coverage Expanded to Volunteers.*

Existing law allows colleges, schools, and other institutions of learning, as well as sports teams, camps, and similar organizations, to issue "blanket insurance" policies that cover all or nearly all persons within a defined class under a single master policy. These policies may insure students, teachers, employees, team participants, campers, officials, supervisors, and persons responsible for their support. Coverage typically includes benefits for accidental death or dismemberment and for hospital, medical, surgical, or nursing expenses resulting from accident or sickness.

AB 487 expands this authority by permitting blanket insurance policies to also cover volunteers. As a result, schools, sports teams, and camps may now include volunteers in their group policies, extending the same protections that already apply to students, staff, and participants.

*(AB 487 amends Section 10270.2 of the Insurance Code.)*

## STUDENT HEALTH & SAFETY, EMPLOYEE MISCONDUCT, AND CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

### *SB 848 — School Employee Misconduct, Child Abuse Prevention Act.*

Existing law regulates mandated reporting, training, and safety planning in public schools but does not apply the same requirements to private schools. Current law requires public and private school employees and certain volunteers to serve as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect, with failure to report punishable as a misdemeanor. However, public schools must also provide annual mandated reporter training and adopt policies on professional boundaries, electronic communications, and student safety. In addition, public schools are subject to certain background checks, employment history disclosure requirements, and various safety and misconduct reporting rules.

This bill extends all of these requirements to all private schools, including independent and religious schools:

- Mandated Reporting (Effective January 1, 2026): All private school board members, and most volunteers are now mandated reporters under Penal Code Section 11165.7.

- Training Requirements (Effective July 1, 2026): Private schools must provide annual mandated reporter training to employees, contractors, board members, and qualifying volunteers. Schools must also implement annual abuse-prevention and professional-boundaries training for adults. The Superintendent will issue guidance for age-appropriate student instruction in abuse prevention and boundaries. Private schools are not required to provide this instruction, but they may choose to offer it annually, and parents have the right to opt their children out of this instruction.

- School Safety and Professional Boundaries Policies (Effective July 1, 2026): Private Schools must adopt written policies that promote safe learning environments and explicitly address: (1) professional boundaries between students and adults, between students, and among adults working or volunteering at the school; (2) limits on electronic communications (including social media and text messaging) between staff and students outside of parent-inclusive channels, with allowances based on student's age; and (3) facility safety plans ensuring classrooms and non-classroom areas are designed and furnished for easy supervision and safe engagement.

- Employment Screening & Misconduct Database (Effective July 1, 2027): Private schools must collect complete employment histories, contact prior school employers to check for substantiated egregious misconduct, and disclose substantiated egregious misconduct when contacted by future employers. Beginning in 2027, schools must participate in a statewide database by reporting the initiation and conclusion of egregious misconduct investigations, noting departures during an investigation, and updating employee status. Schools must also check the database before hiring new employees.

Private schools must immediately expand mandated reporter coverage and begin planning to implement mandated reporter training, abuse-prevention training, and school-safety and professional boundaries policies by July 2026. They must also prepare for major changes to hiring practices and compliance with the statewide misconduct database by 2027.

*(SB 848 adds Section 32100, amends Sections 32280, 32281, 32282, 44010, 44242.5, 44830.1, 44939.5, and 51950, and 44691 to the Education Code; and amends Section 11165.7 to the Penal Code.)*

### *AB 250 — Expanded Revival Window for Certain Sexual Assault Claims.*

Under existing law, a plaintiff may seek damages for sexual assault that occurred on or after the plaintiff's 18th birthday if one or more entities are legally responsible for damages and the entity or its agents engaged in a cover-up, as defined. This law revives claims that would otherwise have been time-barred before January 1, 2023. A plaintiff may proceed with an action if the claim was already pending in court on January 1, 2023, or if the plaintiff filed the action between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023.

AB 250 extends and expands this revival process. The bill permits plaintiffs to bring claims that would otherwise be barred before January 1, 2026, and allows those claims to move forward if they are already pending on January 1, 2026, or if they are filed between January 1, 2026, and December 31, 2027. A revived claim must allege that the plaintiff was sexually assaulted and that one or more entities or persons, including the perpetrator, are legally responsible for damages, as well as that an entity or its representatives engaged in or attempted a cover-up of a previous instance or allegation of sexual assault by the perpetrator.

The bill also revives claims directly against perpetrators of sexual assault when plaintiffs allege that entities or individuals are legally responsible for damages. It clarifies that failure to allege a cover-up against one entity does not prevent revival of claims against another entity or against the perpetrator. For purposes of this law, a "cover-up" means a concerted effort to hide evidence of sexual assault, including through nondisclosure or confidentiality agreements. An "entity" includes businesses and organizations but not public entities. Public entities remain exempt, and the bill specifies that no public entity has a duty to indemnify perpetrators or other persons under revived claims.

In practice, AB 250 gives survivors an additional two-year window, from January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2027, to pursue civil claims that would otherwise be time-barred. The revival applies to claims against perpetrators and private entities that may have engaged in cover-ups, while excluding public entities from liability.

*(AB 250 amends Code of Civil Procedure Section 340.16.)*

### *SB 19 — Threats Against Schools, Preschools, and Childcare Facilities.*

This bill strengthens protections for schools, preschools, and childcare centers by explicitly criminalizing threats made against these locations, whether in person or online. Specifically, this bill adds Penal Code section 422.3, creating a new, location-specific crime for making threats against daycares, schools, universities, workplaces, houses of worship, or medical facilities.

Under SB 19, any person who willfully threatens, by any means, including an image or threat posted or published on an internet web page, to commit a crime that will result in death or great bodily injury at a daycare, school, university, workplace, house of worship, or medical facility, with the specific intent that the statement be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent to carry it out, and if the threat is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect of execution, and if it causes a person or persons to reasonably be in sustained fear for their safety or the safety of others at these locations, shall be punished by imprisonment in the county jail not to exceed one year or by imprisonment. If the offender is under 18, they will be referred to Social Service and if ineligible, the offense is punishable as a misdemeanor.

While this bill does not impose new affirmative duties on schools or childcare providers, the law strengthens protections for these institutions by ensuring that threats targeting them carry clear and enforceable criminal penalties.

*(SB 19 adds Section 422.3 to the Penal Code.)*

### *AB 435 — Updated Passenger Seatbelt Restraint Requirements.*

Beginning January 1, 2027, California law will change how children must be secured in cars, vans, and charter buses. Existing law requires drivers and supervising adults to ensure that children are properly secured in motor vehicles equipped with seat belts. In cars, vans, and trucks, parents, guardians, or drivers must secure children under eight (8) in a child passenger restraint system (car seat or booster) and children ages eight (8) through fifteen (15) must be secured in either a booster seat, a child passenger restraint system, or a seat belt. In charter buses equipped with safety belts, passengers sixteen (16) and older must be restrained, and chartering parties, parents, or guardians must ensure that children under sixteen (16) are restrained. For purposes of these laws, "properly restrained" means that the lap belt fits low across the hips or thighs and the shoulder belt (if present) crosses the chest in front of the passenger.

AB 435, effective January 1, 2027, replaces the current definition of "properly restrained" with the "5-Step Test." Under this standard, a child is only properly restrained if they: (1) sit all the way back against the seat; (2) bend their knees comfortably at the edge; (3) keep the shoulder belt across the middle of the chest and shoulder, not the neck; keep the lap belt low across the thighs, not the stomach; and (4) can stay seated like this for the entire trip.

The 5-Step Test applies to motor vehicles such as cars and vans for children ages 8-15 (and children under 8 who qualify to use a seat belt instead of a car seat under limited exception) and chartered buses with safety belts for children under sixteen (16). The law places the duty on the "chartering party," so a school arranging transportation for a field trip or extracurricular activity must ensure that students meet the 5-Step Test.

The law does not change rules for school buses or school pupil activity buses (SPABs), which remain governed by separate provisions. Violations remain punishable by a $20 fine for a first offense and $50 for subsequent offenses, with the option of traffic school in place of a fine for a first offense.

*(AB 435 Sections 27315, 27318, 27360.5, and 27363 of the Vehicle Code.)*

### *AB 144 — Omnibus Health Trailer Bill Revises HPV Immunization Notification Obligations.*

AB 144 is an omnibus health trailer bill which contains changes to implement the 2025–26 budget and primarily makes changes to health regulations, licensing, Medi-Cal, and public health standards. For schools, the most direct impact comes in the immunization and notification provisions.

Existing law requires school districts to include in the annual notice to parents and guardians that the state recommends students complete the full immunization schedule for the human papillomavirus (HPV) before entering eighth (8th) grade. Existing law also requires both public and private schools to notify parents or guardians that the state recommends HPV vaccination before admission to the 8th grade. Both provisions require the notice to reflect the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and its Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

Beginning July 1, 2026, both public and private schools will need to issue HPV vaccine notices consistent with the recommendations of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), rather than the CDC and ACIP. AB 144 also

specifies that the notice must clearly state that HPV vaccination prevents over 90% of HPV-related cancers, that the vaccine is safe, and that the benefits outweigh the risks.

*(AB 144 amends Section 48980.4 of the Education Code and amends, repeals, and adds Section 120336 of the Health and Safety Code.)*

## NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS

### *SB 373 — Oversight and Student Protections for Students in NPS Placements.*

Existing law requires nonpublic, nonsectarian schools (NPSs) to be certified by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) before they can contract with school districts or county offices of education to serve students with disabilities. Certification involves an onsite review, compliance with credential and staff training requirements, and assurances that students can communicate privately with their individualized education program (IEP) teams. Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) must also conduct annual monitoring visits for each contracting NPS.

SB 373 imposes new obligations on California NPSs and expands LEA duties, especially when students are placed out of state. For California NPSs, the bill clarifies that the prohibition on corporal punishment under Education Code Section 49001 applies not only to public schools but also to NPSs, charter schools, and the State Special Schools for the blind and deaf. Additionally, this bill expands the existing requirement that an NPS ensure confidential communication between a student and their IEP team to specifically mandate that an NPS ensure the privacy and confidentiality of telecommunication when students contact their IEP teams or California Department of Education's Constituent Services Office, at the student's discretion.

For LEAs, this bill expands responsibilities beginning in the 2026–27 school year. Under existing law, LEAs were required to provide students' parents a copy of their rights and procedural safeguards at specified times. Now, any time an LEA is required to provide a parent a copy of their rights and procedural safeguards, the student must also receive a copy.

Additionally, when students are placed in out-of-state NPSs, LEAs must conduct in-person interviews as part of their annual onsite visits, evaluate student health and safety, and report their findings to CDE. They must also conduct quarterly unmonitored phone check-ins with each out-of-state student consistent with the student's IEP. In addition, when an IEP team considers out-of-state placement, LEAs must share the SPI's certification findings with parents, including compliance history and corrective actions, and must document in the IEP that this information has been provided and discussed. By July 1, 2026, CDE must develop a standardized pupil interview tool to help LEAs and SPI evaluate dignity, respect, and safety. LEAs may use this state tool or their own if it meets equivalent standards.

In short, SB 373 reinforces student protections by clarifying and expanding the obligations of both NPSs and LEAs. NPSs must ensure strict confidentiality of student communication and are explicitly covered by the corporal punishment ban, while LEAs face heightened monitoring and notification requirements, particularly when they place students out of state.

*(SB 373 amends Sections 49001, 56301, 56366.1, 56366.4, 56366.12, and 56836.20 of the Education Code.)*

## POST SECONDARY EDUCATION

### *SB 744 — Temporarily Reserves Accreditation Status for California Purposes.*

Under California state law, higher education institutions must receive accreditation to be eligible for state resources and professional licensures. Accreditors review institutions' policies and curricula to certify that they meet a specified level of quality for all higher education institutions. This accreditation makes students eligible for financial aid, student loans, and deems that a degree or certificate that they earn from the institutions meets a federally recognized standard.

This bill provides a temporary safeguard for California institutions of higher education in light of concerns about changes to the federal accreditation landscape. The bill specifies that as of January 1, 2026, any national or regional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as of January 1, 2025, will retain that recognition in California until July 1, 2029, so long as the accrediting agency continues to operate in substantially the same manner as it did on January 1, 2025. The bill also amends Education Code section 66010 to align the definition of "independent institutions of higher education" with this recognition timeline.

*(SB 744 amends and repeals Section 66010 of the Education Code and adds and repeals Section 144.7 of the Business and Professions Code.)*

### *AB 594 — Permits Students To Terminate Institutional Health Plans Mid-Year And Expands Oversight Of Insurers.*

AB 594 establishes new legal requirements for student health insurance plans offered by institutions of higher education. Since 2024, California law has classified student health insurance as a form of individual coverage but has exempted it from certain regulations, including guaranteed availability, minimum coverage standards, and single risk pool requirements. Once enrolled, students are generally required to maintain their student health insurance for the entire policy year.

Effective July 1, 2026, this bill makes several significant changes to the administration and regulation of student health insurance coverage, including:

- Mid-Year Termination: Students who graduate, take a leave of absence, or withdraw may request to end coverage during the policy year. They must submit the request at least 30 days in advance. Institutions must end coverage within the same month if possible, and no later than the last day of that month. Students remain responsible only for premiums through the termination date, and institutions must issue a pro rata refund for any unused portion if the student prepaid for the year. Enrollment materials must clearly state this right to terminate coverage.

- Waivers for Other Coverage: Institutions must grant a waiver if a student requests it and proves enrollment in other minimum essential coverage (such as Medi-Cal, Covered California, or parental coverage). Institutions may not charge fees or premiums when they grant a waiver.

- Rate Oversight: The bill expands the Department of Insurance's enforcement authority. The Insurance Commissioner may block rate changes if an insurer misses filing deadlines and may impose administrative penalties of up to $5,000 per violation, or $10,000 for willful violations.

All California institutions of higher education must revise their student health insurance practices. They must allow mid-year termination and pro rata refunds, establish clear waiver procedures for students with other coverage, update enrollment materials, and coordinate with insurers to comply with expanded Department of Insurance oversight.

*(AB 594 amends Section 10965.03 of the Insurance Code.)*

## BUSINESS AND FACILITIES

### *AB 310 — Nevaeh Youth Sports Safety Act.*

Existing law, the Nevaeh Youth Sports Safety Act, requires youth sports organizations (including nonprofit entities such as schools that sponsor or conduct amateur sports competitions, training, camps, or clubs in which persons 17 years of age or younger participate) to ensure athletes have access to an automated external defibrillator (AED) during any official practice or match beginning on January 1, 2027. Existing law also requires that, if an AED is administered during an applicable medical circumstance, it must be administered by a medical professional, coach, or other person designated by the youth sports organization, who holds AED certification and who complies with any other qualifications required pursuant to federal and state law applicable to the use of an AED.

AB 310 delays the requirement that athletes have access to an AED until January 1, 2028 and removes the requirement that a medical professional administer the AED. AB 310 adds a requirement that, beginning January 1, 2027, youth sports organizations must ensure that its coaches are certified to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and operate an AED, with recertification required every two years.
AB 310 also adds a requirement that youth sports organizations adopt and annually review a written cardiac emergency response plan that details all of the following: (1) AED locations; (2) procedures to be followed in the event of a sudden cardiac arrest; (3) the responsibility of the coach, administration, and athletes during the event; (4) how the coach, administration, and athletes will be notified and trained on the emergency response plan; and (5) an annual electronic communication to the parents/guardians of enrolled participants that includes the emergency response plan or an internet link to it, AED locations, and identification of which staff members are designated to be notified if there is a sudden cardiac event.

Finally, AB 310 requires that, starting January 1, 2028, youth sports organizations ensure that their AEDs are maintained and tested in accordance with manufacturer guidelines, as well as the applicable rules and regulations of the Food and Drug Administration or any other applicable state or federal authority.

*(AB 310 amends Section 124238.5 of the Health and Safety Code.)*

### *AB 483 — Limits to Early Termination Fees for Fixed Term Installment Contracts.*

AB 483 establishes new consumer protections related to fixed term installment contracts for the sale of goods or services that are entered into or modified on or after August 1, 2026. Specifically, AB 483 prohibits sellers from charging a consumer a fee to terminate a fixed term installment contract, unless the contract includes a clear and conspicuous written disclosure of either: (1) the total cost of the early termination fee; or (2) the formula used to calculate the early termination fee, along with the maximum possible amount for the fee. This disclosure must be visible without additional consumer interaction, such as clicking through a hyperlink. Additionally, AB 483 caps any early termination fee at 30% of the total sum the consumer is obligated to pay under the fixed-term installment contract, excluding the fee itself.

AB 483 does not affect a consumer's right to pay off the balance of a fixed term installment contract early or the seller's right to require the return of goods upon early termination. AB 483 also does not apply to any of the following: (1) providers of broadband internet access service that comply with federal broadband consumer requirements; (2) home improvement contracts; or (3) fixed term installment contracts regulated by a state or federal law that provides greater protection to consumers.

*(AB 483 adds Chapter 4, commencing with Section 17800, to Part 3 of Division 7 of the Business and Professions Code.)*

### *SB 440 — Establishes a Claim Resolution Process for Private Works.*

SB 440 establishes a claim resolution process for claims by a contractor or subcontractor related to a work of improvement or site improvement. This resolution process can be used until January 1, 2030 for contracts entered into on or after January 1, 2026.

For purposes of SB 440, a claim is a written demand by a contractor or subcontractor for one or more of the following: (1) a time extension; (2) payment by the owner of money or damages that is not expressly provided for but that arises from work done by the contractor pursuant to the contract; or (3) payment by the owner of a disputed amount. An owner is the owner of the building, improvement, or structure to be constructed, altered or repaired; an owner does not include a public agency.

The resolution process outlined by SB 440 first involves the owner reviewing the claim. If the owner disputes portions of the claim, then the contractor or subcontractor may demand an informal conference. If disputed portions of the claim remain after the informal conference, then that portion of the claim must be submitted to nonbinding mediation. Finally, if the mediation is unsuccessful, then the disputed portion of the claim will be subject to any dispute resolution procedures included in the contract between the parties or by final judgment if no such procedures exist.

*(SB 414 adds Article 4 (commencing with Section 8850) to Chapter 8 of Title 2 of Part 6 of Division 4 of the Civil Code.)*

### *SB 446 — Requires Disclosure of Data Breaches to Consumers within 30 Days.*

Existing law requires an individual or a business that owns or licenses computerized data including personal information to disclose a breach of the security of the system to any California resident whose unencrypted personal information was compromised. SB 446 requires that this disclosure be made within 30 calendar days of discovery or notification of the data breach; however, SB 446 allows delay of disclosure to accommodate the legitimate needs of law enforcement or as necessary to determine the scope of the breach and restore the reasonable integrity of the data system.

Existing law also requires that, if an individual or business must issue a disclosure to more than 500 California residents as a result of a single breach, it must submit a sample disclosure to the Attorney General (AG). SB 446 requires that this submission to the AG be made within fifteen (15) calendar days of notifying affected consumers.
*(SB 446 amends Section 1798.82 of the Civil Code.)*

### *SB 652 — Security Guard Training.*

Existing law, the Private Security Services Act, prohibits a licensed private patrol operator from allowing an employee to perform the functions of a security guard without confirming that the employee holds a current and valid security guard registration. Existing law further requires each applicant for a security guard registration to complete training on the power to arrest and the appropriate use of force.

SB 652 now requires that this training be administered and certified by a single course provider and that it be completed within six (6) months prior to submission of the application to the Bureau of Security and Investigative Services. SB 652 also provides that a licensed private patrol operator may only administer, test, and certify this training for its own applicants or employees.

*(SB 652 amends Sections 7583.6 and 7583.10 of the Business and Professions Code.)*

### *AB 1155 — Compensation for Law Student Externships.*

AB 1155 would require law schools to allow law students to receive compensation from an externship while concurrently earning academic course credit beginning August 1, 2026. AB 115 applies to law schools accredited by California or by the American Bar Association that receive, or benefit from, state-funded student financial assistance or that enroll students who receive state-funded student financial assistance. However, AB 1155 only applies to law schools at the University of California to the extent that the Regents of the University of California act, by appropriate resolution, to make the provisions of AB 1155 applicable.

While AB 1155 requires that law schools allow students to be compensated for externships, it does not require that students actually be compensated for externships. Ultimately, whether to compensate and the amount of compensation is set by the externship employer.

*(AB 1155 adds Chapter 7.5 (commencing with Section 66550) to Part 40 of Division 5 of Title 3 of the Education Code.)*

### *SB 151 — Several Budget-Related Adjustments to California's Subsidized Early Childhood Education and Childcare System.*

Under existing law, the state reimburses recipients of state childcare subsidies, including licensed childcare centers, licensed family childcare homes, and license-exempt providers based on the maximum authorized or certified hours of care listed in a family's eligibility paperwork, rather than a child's actual attendance. Originally adopted during the COVID-19 emergency to stabilize provider income, this approach was set to expire in June 2026. SB 151 extends it through July 1, 2028.

The bill also makes permanent the "cost of care plus" monthly rate add-ons for subsidized family childcare providers and centers. These supplemental per-child payments, which vary by region and provider type, will now continue indefinitely.

Under SB 151, providers will also receive a one-time stabilization payment for each subsidized child enrolled in April 2025: $431 per child for licensed family childcare homes and centers, and $300 per child for license-exempt providers. SB 151 appropriates $157.8 million from the General Fund to cover these stabilization payments. Finally, the bill guarantees continued funding for the CCPU Training Partnership Fund, the Workers Health Care Fund, and the Retirement Trust, with annual contributions through July 1, 2028. It also approves the August 7, 2025 agreement between the State and CCPU, giving effect to provisions requiring legislative approval.

*(SB 151 amends Section 8245.5 of the Education Code and Sections 10227.5, 10277.1, 10277.2, 10277.3, 10277.4, and 10277.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.)*