

State and Federal Policy Update

This document is prepared by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office as part of its regular monthly and bimonthly updates for the Consultation Council and the Board of Governors, respectively. The information presented herein is current as of January 3, 2025. The latest information will be provided to the Consultation Council and the Board of Governors at the time of the presentation.

STATE ADVOCACY OVERVIEW

The Legislature convened for the first year of the 2025-26 Legislative Session on December 2, 2024. The new class of legislators includes a total of 24 Assemblymembers and 12 Senators that did not serve in that same role during the 2023-24 Legislative Session. Of these 36 new members, at least eight of them attended a California Community College, and eight of them have identified as a first-generation college student. At least five members have previously served as faculty, and 12 new members have identified higher education access and affordability as a top policy priority.

The 2025-26 Legislative Class also achieved a new record in gender equity in representation. Of the 120 legislative seats, women comprise 59 seats, or 49 percent. For the first time in the state's history, women will comprise a majority of the 40-member Senate. Democrats retained their supermajority in both the Assembly (60 Democrats-19 Republicans) and Senate (30 Democrats-9 Republicans). As part of the new session ceremonies, the Senate re-elected Mike McGuire (D-San Rafael) as President pro Tempore; the Assembly re-elected Robert Rivas (D-Salinas) as Speaker.

Speaker Rivas announced the Assembly committee chairperson appointments for the 2025-26 Legislative Session, which are similar to the assignments from the 2023-24 Legislative Session. Assemblymember Mike Fong (D-Alhambra) will continue to chair the Assembly Higher Education Committee and Assemblymember David Alvarez (D-Chula Vista) will remain as chair of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 3 on Education Finance. Assembly committee members have not been announced and there are no additional updates regarding Senate committee assignments.

STATE LEGISLATION OVERVIEW

178 Assembly Bills (AB) and Senate Bills (SB) have been introduced in the Legislature. Of those, the Chancellor's Office is tracking 7 Tier 1 bills, which are most likely to have a direct impact on the community colleges, our faculty, and our students. The last day to introduce legislation is February 21, 2025.

High-Priority Legislation

A full Legislative Matrix with bill descriptions and bill status can be found by visiting the [State Relations page on the Chancellor's Office website](http://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Government-Relations-Policy-in-Action/Policy-in-action/State-Relations/Tracked-Legislation) (www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Government-Relations-Policy-in-Action/Policy-in-action/State-Relations/Tracked-Legislation).

Academic Pathways, Instruction, and Transfer

1. AB 9 (Quirk-Silva) University of California: California State University: transfer students.

Basic Needs

1. AB 79 (Arambula) Public social services: higher education.

Facilities

1. AB 48 (Alvarez) College Health and Safety Bond Act of 2026.

Undocumented Students

1. AB 49 (Muratsuchi) Schoolsites and day care centers: entry requirements: immigration enforcement.
2. AB 85 (Essayli) Law enforcement: cooperation with immigration authorities.
3. SB 48 (Gonzalez Immigration enforcement: schoolsites: prohibitions on access, sharing information, and law enforcement collaboration.

Labor and Employment

1. AB 65 (Aguilar-Curry) School and community college employees: paid disability and parental leave.

Budget Bills

1. ABX1 (Gabriel) Budget Act of 2024.
2. SBX1 (Weiner) Budget Act of 2024.

Other potential themes we anticipate in 2025 legislation:

- Affordability
- Nursing and healthcare
- Student equity
- Student safety and protection
- Workforce and career education

CONGRESSIONAL UPDATE

The 119th United States (U.S.) Congress convened on January 3rd, 2025, with Republicans maintaining their majority in the U.S. House of Representatives and taking control of the U.S. Senate. As reported in our December report, Republicans will attain a federal government trifecta for the first time since 2017. Three incoming members to the Congressional delegation formerly served as state Assemblymembers or Senators (Assemblymember Luz Rivas, Assemblymember Laura Friedman, and Senator Dave Min).

In the first round of voting, Speaker of the House Mike Johnson fell short on his attempt to remain speaker of the 119th Congress. With a thin margin, he was able to secure the remaining two votes to win the speakership.

Prominent Leadership for the 119th Congress

House Committee on Appropriations

- Representative (Rep.) Tom Cole (R-OK), Chair
- Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Ranking Member

House Committee on the Budget

- Rep. Jodey Arrington (R-TX)
- Rep. Brendan Boyle (D-PA), Ranking Member

House Committee on Education and the Workforce

- Rep. Tim Walberg (R-MI), Chair
- Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA), Ranking Member

House Committee on Energy and Commerce

- Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-KY), Chair
- Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Ranking Member

House Committee on Homeland Security

- Rep. Mark Green (R-TN), Chair
- Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-MS), Ranking Member

House Committee on the Judiciary

- Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH), Chair
- Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD), Ranking Member

House Committee on Natural Resources

- Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-AR), Chair
- Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA), Ranking Member

House Committee on Veterans Affairs

- Rep. Mike Bost (R-IL), Chair
- Rep. Mark Takano (D-CA), Ranking Member

Senate Committee on Appropriations

- Senator Susan Collins (R-ME), Chair
- Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), Ranking Member

Senate Committee on the Budget

- Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Chair
- Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Ranking Member

Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

- Senator Mike Lee (R-UT), Chair
- Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Ranking Member

Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

- Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Chair
- Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Ranking Member

Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

- Senator Rand Paul (R-KY), Chair
- Senator Gary Peters (D-MI), Ranking Member

Senate Committee on the Judiciary

- Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA), Chair
- Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL), Ranking Member

Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs

- Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS), Chair
- Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Ranking Member

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

The United States Senate and U.S. House of Representatives have passed legislation reauthorizing the Commerce Department's Economic Development Administration (EDA) for the first time in two decades. On December 26, 2024, the legislation was presented to President Biden for his signature. Key components of the EDA reauthorization include:

- Codifies EDA's role in establishing industry-led workforce training partnerships that invest in innovative approaches to workforce development.
- Aligns EDA to better support other key Commerce Department priorities in supply chain and manufacturing, and broadband.

- Establishes an EDA Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilience

JUDICIAL BRANCH ACTIVITY

On December 6, the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland ruled that the United States Naval Academy can continue using race in its admissions practices. Rejecting Students for Fair Admissions v. President & Fellows of Harvard Colleges (SFFA) argument that the Naval Academy has “no justification for using race-based admissions,” Judge Richard Bennett ruled that “The Academy has tied its use of race to the realization of an officer corps that represents the country it protects and the people it leads...[the] admissions program is narrowly tailored to meet that interest.” He also affirmed the Naval Academy’s argument that “the racial diversity of the Navy and Marine Corps..has enhanced national security by improving the Navy and Marine Corps' unit cohesion and lethality, recruitment and retention, and domestic and international legitimacy.” On December 10, SFFA sued the U.S. Air Force Academy over its admissions practices. As in the complaints against the U.S. Military Academy and the U.S. Naval Academy, SFFA argues that the United States Air Force Academy has “no justification for using race-based admissions.”

ADVOCATES

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