
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Carol Liu, Chair
2015 - 2016 Regular

Bill No: AB 2732
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Urgency: No
Consultant: Olgalilia Ramirez
Hearing Date: June 8, 2016
Fiscal: Yes

Subject: Public postsecondary education: mandatory orientation for students

SUMMARY

This bill requires the California State University (CSU) Trustees and requests the University of California (UC) Regents, to provide, as part of established campus orientations, educational and preventive information about cyberbullying to students at all campuses of their respective segments.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Requests the UC Regents, CSU Trustees, and the governing board of each community college district to adopt and publish policies on harassment, intimidation, and bullying to be included within the rules and regulations governing student behavior within their respective segments of public postsecondary education. (Education Code § 66302)
- 2) Requires the governing board of each community college district and the CSU Trustees, and request the UC Regents to, in collaboration with campus-based and community-based victim advocacy organizations, provide, as part of established campus orientations, educational and preventive information about sexual violence to students at all campuses of their respective segments; and, specifies that for a campus with an existing on-campus orientation program, this information shall be provided, in addition to the sexual harassment information required to be provided, as specified, during the regular orientation for incoming students. (EC § 67385.7)

ANALYSIS

This bill requires the CSU Trustees and requests the UC Regents, to provide, as part of established campus orientations, educational and preventive information about cyberbullying to students at all campuses of their respective segments.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, as frequent users of social media and digital technology, college students are vulnerable to cyberbullying. The author asserts that this new form of harassment has been linked to suicide, alcoholism

and depression among college students. According to a University of Washington study on college age women, cyberbullying and its effects have been studied largely in middle and high school students but attention is needed in the college population. This bill seeks to ensure California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) students are aware of cyberbullying and its prevention.

- 2) ***Existing efforts to address student conduct.*** CSU and UC have policies on student conduct and discipline procedures that, among other things, prohibit harassment, intimidation or terrorizing conduct, on or off campus. Both CSU and UC indicate that each campus works to ensure that students become familiar with their campus' student conduct policies and are aware of available resources for reporting misconduct. It's unclear whether this information is provided to students at the beginning of the year during orientation. However, staff notes that existing law also requires CSU and requests UC to include sexual harassment information during the regular orientation for incoming students. This bill would add cyberbullying to the list of required information at orientation.

Given that UC and CSU standards for student conduct address harassment, intimidation and other forms of student behavior, should efforts solely focus on cyberbullying? Is legislation necessary to define which issues are covered as part of college orientation?

- 3) ***Efforts to address bullying in K-12 education.*** Current law prohibits discrimination in public schools on the basis of disability, gender, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes. Additionally, the California Department of Education (CDE) is required to monitor whether school districts have adopted a process for receiving and investigating complaints relating to discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Existing law authorizes schools to suspend or expel students for acts of bullying, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act. The CDE is further required to develop an online training module on bullying and cyberbullying for school staff, school administrators, parents, students, and community members.
- 4) ***No definition for cyberbullying.*** This bill does not define cyberbullying. Existing law, however, define bullying by an "electronic act," for k-12 to mean the creation or transmission of a communication originated on or off the school site, by means of an electronic device including but not limited to a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager. Although this bill provides no definition for cyberbullying, college campuses may need greater flexibility to keep pace with digital technology as it evolves.

SUPPORT

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
California College and University Police Chiefs Association
California State Student Association

OPPOSITION

None received.

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