

## CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 524 (Rodriguez)

As Amended August 15, 2022

Majority vote

**SUMMARY**

Requires, beginning October 1, 2023, an institution of higher education to collect and post on its campus website and annually email to all enrolled students a report containing certain information about its campus-recognized sororities and fraternities.

**Major Provisions**

- 1) Establishes the Campus-Recognized Sorority and Fraternity Transparency Act (Act), which would require each institution of higher education to include in the institution's requirements for campus recognition of a campus-recognized sorority or fraternity, as defined, a requirement that the sorority or fraternity submit to the institution specified information concerning the sorority's or fraternity's members and their conduct on or before July 1, 2023, and annually thereafter.
- 2) Requires the institution to suspend the campus recognition of any campus-recognized sorority or fraternity that does not comply with the reporting requirements.
- 3) Requires each institution with sororities or fraternities to compile the collected information into a publicly accessible report posted, and archived, on each respective campus' Greek Life internet homepage or its equivalent for a minimum of 10 years and sent through a campuswide email to all enrolled students on or before October 1, 2023, and annually thereafter.
- 4) To the extent this bill would impose new duties on community college districts, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

**Senate Amendments**

Amendments taken in the Senate:

- 1) Requires campus-recognized sororities and fraternities to submit information to an institution, as specified.
- 2) Defines "participating sorority or fraternity" and "sanctioned event", as specified.
- 3) Makes various technical and clarifying changes.

**COMMENTS**

*Background.* Sororities and fraternities are popular social organizations active at many postsecondary institutions in California. Comprised of dozens of individual organizations overseen by nearly a dozen representative bodies, sororities and fraternities each operate under differing principals and standards. Common requirements for members include a probationary period for pledging members and grade point average and community service requirements for initiated members.

The North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC), one of several representative organizations consisting of 65 men's fraternities, note that their current member organizations have 6,100 chapters located on 800 campuses nationally, with 385,000 undergraduate members and 4.2 million alumni. NIC reported that, in 2013-2014, their members contributed 3.8 million service hours in local communities, raised \$20.3 million dollars for philanthropic causes, and maintained an average fraternity grade point average of 2.91.

*Reform efforts and transparency.* Instances of hazing, alcohol abuse, and sexual assault have prompted reforms in campus-affiliated sororities and fraternities across the country.

Penn State established the Timothy J. Piazza Center for Fraternity and Sorority Research and Reform in January 2019. The multidisciplinary research center was named in the memory of Timothy Piazza, a sophomore at Penn State who died in February 2017 during pledging activities at Beta Theta Pi, a campus-affiliated fraternity that is permanently banned at the university. The Piazza Center is currently working to develop and manage a national scorecard on fraternities and sororities, host national conversations on hazing, the misuse of alcohol, sexual assault, and overly large and disruptive social events, collect and distribute best practices, and sponsor original research that will inform practices in this field.

The death of 20-year-old Florida State University Pi Kappa Phi fraternity pledge Andrew Coffey in November of 2017 resulted in the significant reforms on the campus, where 22% undergraduates belonged to a fraternity or sorority. The reforms included:

- 1) A new grade point average requirement of 2.5 for every chapter.
- 2) A minimum of 10 documented service hours per member every semester.
- 3) Completion of a special orientation program for students who are interested in joining a fraternity or sorority.
- 4) A membership review between organization and their national chapters.
- 5) A "scorecard" made available to the public on each chapter.

### **According to the Author**

According to the author, "Too many lives have been impacted by hazing at California colleges and universities. While progress has been made in curbing sexual violence and excessive drinking, there is still a culture on campuses and within some organizations, which must change. With more transparency, students and families can make informed decisions about the social and professional organizations they choose to invest time, resources, and personal safety into joining."

"AB 524 would shed light on individual Greek Life organizations which historically have struggled to comply with laws and university policies. This bill would allow students and their families to better understand the history and culture of a particular social organization on campus to make a more informed decision about their education, health and safety. It is reasonable to anticipate that social organization will be held more accountable with transparent information that may encourage them to change organizational culture."

**Arguments in Support**

Equal Rights Advocates wrote in support of the AB 524, noting that, "Transparency enables informed decisions by pledges about the Greek life chapters' accomplishments and acts of misconduct, which is both an issue of personal safety as well as one of optimizing the development of the pledge's academic interests. **Additionally, AB 524 will achieve transparency while respecting students' right to privacy as provided by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act by only providing non-identifiable information.** These common-sense provisions strengthen public safety of higher education communities."

**Arguments in Opposition**

None on file.

**FISCAL COMMENTS**

The Senate Committee on Appropriations determined that AB 524 does not contain significant fiscal impact and, pursuant to Senate Rule 28.8, sent the bill directly to the Senate Floor.

**VOTES:****ASM HIGHER EDUCATION: 11-0-1**

**YES:** Medina, Choi, Arambula, Bloom, Gabriel, Irwin, Levine, Low, Blanca Rubio, Santiago, Valladares

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Kiley

**ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 16-0-0**

**YES:** Lorena Gonzalez, Bigelow, Calderon, Carrillo, Chau, Megan Dahle, Davies, Fong, Gabriel, Eduardo Garcia, Levine, Quirk, Robert Rivas, Holden, Akilah Weber, Berman

**ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 64-0-12**

**YES:** Aguiar-Curry, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Bigelow, Bloom, Boerner Horvath, Bryan, Burke, Calderon, Cervantes, Choi, Cooley, Cunningham, Daly, Davies, Flora, Fong, Friedman, Gabriel, Cristina Garcia, Gipson, Grayson, Holden, Irwin, Jones-Sawyer, Kalra, Kiley, Lackey, Lee, Levine, Low, Maienschein, Mathis, McCarty, Medina, Mullin, Muratsuchi, Nazarian, Nguyen, O'Donnell, Patterson, Petrie-Norris, Quirk, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Reyes, Luz Rivas, Robert Rivas, Rodriguez, Blanca Rubio, Salas, Santiago, Seyarto, Smith, Stone, Ting, Valladares, Villapudua, Ward, Akilah Weber, Wicks, Wood, Rendon

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Arambula, Mia Bonta, Carrillo, Chen, Cooper, Megan Dahle, Gallagher, Eduardo Garcia, Gray, Mayes, Voepel, Waldron

**SENATE FLOOR: 37-0-3**

**YES:** Allen, Archuleta, Atkins, Becker, Borgeas, Bradford, Caballero, Cortese, Dahle, Dodd, Durazo, Eggman, Glazer, Gonzalez, Grove, Hertzberg, Hueso, Hurtado, Jones, Kamlager, Laird, Leyva, Limón, McGuire, Min, Newman, Nielsen, Ochoa Bogh, Portantino, Roth, Rubio, Skinner, Stern, Umberg, Wieckowski, Wiener, Wilk

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Bates, Melendez, Pan

**UPDATED**

VERSION: August 15, 2022

CONSULTANT: Kevin J. Powers / HIGHER ED. / (916) 319-3960

FN: 0004146