



Legislative Update

October 2, 2020

INTRODUCTION

August 31 marked the end of an unprecedented two-year legislative session, one in which the number of bills heard was pared down because of the COVID-19 pandemic and all hearings were held online.

Governor Newsom had until September 30 to sign or veto those bills that made it to his desk. Below is a summary of 10 important bills that the governor signed and 1 that he vetoed. Bills without an emergency clause and signed into law will take effect on January 1, 2021.

ALL-UNION – Signed

Landmark Student Borrower Bill of Rights

[Assembly Bill 376](#) (*Stone, D-Scotts Valley*) makes California the first state in the nation to create a comprehensive set of rights for people holding student debt by requiring student loan companies to treat borrowers fairly and giving borrowers the right to hold these companies accountable when they fail to meet basic servicing standards.

AB 376 was signed into law by the governor on September 25, 2020. CFT co-sponsored AB 376.

Safer air and water, and more energy efficient, in schools

[Assembly Bill 841](#) (*Ting, D-San Francisco*) creates a program to make the air safer to breathe and the water safer to drink in public schools while also reducing energy bills. The bill also accelerates installing infrastructure for zero-emission vehicles needed to combat the largest source of dangerous local air pollution that exacerbates the health risks associated with COVID-19.

AB 841 was signed into law by the governor on September 30, 2020. CFT Position: Support

Mandated reporting extended to some businesses

[Assembly Bill 1963](#) (*Chu, D-San Jose*) adds a human resource employee of a business with five or more employees and that employs minors to the list of individuals who are mandated reporters under the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act. In addition, the bill adds, for the purposes of reporting sexual abuse, an adult whose duties require direct contact with and supervision of minors in the performance of the minor’s duties in the workplace to the list of individuals who are mandated reporters. Finally, AB 1963 requires those employers to provide their employees who are mandated reporters with training on identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect.

AB 1963 was signed into law by the governor on September 29, 2020. CFT Position: Support

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Establish an Office of Suicide Prevention

[Assembly Bill 2112](#) (Ramos, D-Highland) authorizes the State Department of Public Health to establish the Office of Suicide Prevention within the department, requires the office to perform specified duties, including providing strategic guidance to statewide and regional partners regarding best practices on suicide prevention and reporting to the legislature on progress to reduce rates of suicide and authorizes the office to apply for and use federal grants. AB 2112 requires the office to consult with the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission to implement suicide prevention efforts and requires the commission to transfer its suicide prevention efforts to the office as prescribed. Finally, the bill requires that the duties and responsibilities of the office be accomplished with existing staff and resources.

AB 2112 was signed into law by the governor on September 25, 2020. CFT Position: Support

Requires Personal Protective Equipment for essential workers

[Senate Bill 275](#) (Pan, D-Sacramento) requires healthcare providers and the state to have a stockpile of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for use by healthcare and essential workers during an emergency.

SB 275 was signed into law by the governor on September 29, 2020. CFT Position: Support

Coordinates foster youth program and financial aid application

[Senate Bill 860](#) (Beall, D-San Jose) requires the foster youth services plan to describe how the Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program will coordinate efforts to ensure, to the extent possible, the completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the California Dream Act Application for foster youth students who are in grade 12. In addition, SB 860 requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to include in their report to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the legislature and the governor the number and percentage of pupils in foster care who successfully complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid or California Dream Act Application while in grade 12.

SB 860 was signed into law by the governor on September 28, 2020. CFT Position: Support

Creates rebuttable Workers' Compensation presumption

[Senate Bill 1159](#) (Hill, D-San Mateo) creates a rebuttable Workers' Compensation presumption for healthcare workers, first responders, or workers on any worksite that has an outbreak. Specifically, the bill allows school employees to automatically qualify for the rebuttable Workers' Compensation presumption if the school is closed for COVID-related issues. SB 1159 ensures that if the employees contract COVID-19, they will have access to the care they need and can stay home with wage replacement benefits.

SB 1159 was signed into law by the governor on September 17, 2020. CFT Position: Support

CLASSIFIED – Signed

Improves Personnel Commissions for classified employees

[Assembly Bill 2234](#) (Chau, D-Arcadia) makes improvements to school Personnel Commissions and ensures their right to independent legal counsel. This bill extends existing law by allowing school personnel commissioners to have a role in determining if a conflict of interest exists between the personnel commission and the local school board, entitling them to independent legal counsel.

AB 2234 was signed into law by the governor on September 9, 2020. CFT Position: Support

PreK-12 EDUCATORS & CLASSIFIED – Signed

Retroactive granting of diplomas due to pandemic

[Assembly Bill 1350](#) (*Gonzalez, D-San Diego*) authorizes a high school district, unified school district, county office of education, or the governing body of a charter school to retroactively grant a high school diploma to a person who was in their senior year of high school during the 2019–20 school year, in good academic standing and on track to graduate at the end of the 2019–20 school year, as of March 1, 2020, and unable to complete the statewide graduation requirements as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

AB 1350 was signed into law by the governor on September 11, 2020. CFT Position: Support

Limits a district’s affordable housing to school employees

[Assembly Bill 3308](#) (*Gabriel, D-Encino*) specifies that the state policy created by the Teacher Housing Act of 2016 includes permitting school districts to restrict occupancy of affordable rental units built on land they own to teachers and other school district employees. In addition, the bill permits school districts and developers in receipt of tax credits designated for building affordable rental housing on school district property to retain the right to prioritize and restrict occupancy to school district employees so long as that it does not violate any other applicable laws.

AB 3308 was signed into law by the governor on September 28, 2020. CFT Position: Support

PreK-12 EDUCATORS – Vetoed

Adds Ethnic Studies to high school graduation requirements

[Assembly Bill 331](#) (*Medina, D-Riverside*) would have added the completion of an ethnic studies course to the requirements for high school graduation starting in the 2024-25 school year. The measure would have permitted the course to be offered in any discipline, not just English language arts and social studies, provided that it is based on the ethnic studies model curriculum.

AB 331 was vetoed by the governor on September 30, 2020. Read the governor’s [veto message here](#). CFT Position: Support

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