

AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 18, 2014  
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 8, 2014  
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 24, 2014  
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 7, 2014  
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 19, 2014  
CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2013–14 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 2350**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Bonilla  
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Garcia, Gonzalez, Skinner, and  
Waldron)**

February 21, 2014

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An act to add Section 66281.7 to the Education Code, relating to postsecondary education.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2350, as amended, Bonilla. Postsecondary education: Equity in Higher Education Act: prevention of pregnancy discrimination.

Existing law, known as the Donahoe Higher Education Act, sets forth, among other things, the missions and functions of California's public and independent segments of higher education and their respective institutions of higher education. Provisions of the act apply to the University of California only to the extent that the Regents of the University of California, by appropriate resolution, act to make a provision applicable.

A portion of the Donahoe Higher Education Act known as the Equity in Higher Education Act declares, among other things, that it is the

policy of the State of California that all persons, regardless of their sex, should enjoy freedom from discrimination of any kind in the postsecondary educational institutions of the state.

This bill would express various legislative findings and declarations relating to pregnancy discrimination. The bill would add to the Equity in Higher Education Act a provision specifying that this policy of freedom from discrimination includes, but is not limited to, freedom from pregnancy discrimination as described in a specified federal statute.

This bill would prohibit postsecondary educational institutions, including the faculty, staff, or other employees of these institutions, from requiring a graduate student to take a leave of absence, withdraw from the graduate program, or limit his or her graduate studies solely due to pregnancy or pregnancy-related issues. The bill would require postsecondary educational institutions, including the faculty, staff, or other employees of these institutions, to reasonably accommodate pregnant graduate students, as specified, so that they may complete their graduate courses of study and research.

The bill would also allow a graduate student who chooses to take a leave of absence because she is pregnant or has recently given birth a period consistent with the policies of the postsecondary educational institution, or a period of 12 additional months, whichever period is longer, to prepare for and take preliminary and qualifying examinations and an extension of at least 12 months toward normative time to degree while they are in candidacy for a graduate degree, unless a longer extension is medically necessary. *The bill would allow a graduate student who is not the birth parent and who chooses to take a leave of absence because of the birth of his or her child a period consistent with the policies of the postsecondary educational institution, or a period of one month, whichever period is longer, to prepare for and take preliminary and qualifying examinations, and an extension of at least one month toward normative time to degree while he or she is in candidacy for a graduate degree, unless a longer period or extension is medically necessary to care for his or her partner or their child.*

The bill would provide that an enrolled graduate student in good academic standing who chooses to take a leave of absence because she is pregnant or has recently given birth would return to her program in good academic standing following a leave period ~~of a duration determined by that is consistent with the policies of the postsecondary educational institution, or a period of 2-academic-year semester terms or 3-academic-year trimester terms,~~ *up to one academic year, whichever*

period is longer, subject to the reasonable administrative requirements of the institution, unless there is a medical reason for a longer absence, in which case her standing in the graduate program would be maintained during that period of absence. *The bill would also provide that an enrolled graduate student in good academic standing who is not the birth parent and who chooses to take a leave of absence because of the birth of his or her child would return to his or her program in good academic standing following a leave period that is consistent with the policies of the postsecondary educational institution, or a period of up to one month, whichever period is longer, subject to the reasonable administrative requirements of the institution.*

The bill would require each postsecondary educational institution to have a written policy on pregnancy discrimination and procedures for addressing pregnancy discrimination complaints under Title IX or this bill. The bill would require a copy of this policy to be made available to faculty, staff, and employees in their required training, and made available to all students attending orientation sessions at a postsecondary educational institution.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the  
2 following:

3 (a) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C.  
4 Sec. 1681, et seq.) is best known for providing equity to female  
5 and male athletics, but it also specifically addresses pregnancy  
6 discrimination.

7 (b) In 2012, the Obama administration began an initiative to  
8 increase the number of women in the science, technology,  
9 engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. President Obama  
10 tasked the United States Department of Education to lead an  
11 initiative with the Department of Justice, the Department of Energy,  
12 the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National  
13 Science Foundation, and the Department of Health and Human  
14 Services to create a common guidance program to ensure that grant  
15 recipients are complying with Title IX.

1 (c) The federal initiative focuses on women scientists, but Title  
2 IX compliance is also incredibly important across all academic  
3 fields at all colleges and universities.

4 (d) Preventing pregnancy discrimination in the STEM fields is  
5 particularly important because it is known to hinder the  
6 advancement of women in these fields. For example, even though  
7 women represent between 35 and 40 percent of graduate students  
8 in chemistry, less than 13 percent of faculty at the top 50  
9 universities in the United States are women.

10 (e) According to a survey of doctorate recipients by the National  
11 Science Foundation, “women who are married with children in  
12 the sciences are 35 percent less likely to enter a tenure track  
13 position after receipt of their Ph.D. than married men with children,  
14 and they are 27 percent less likely than their male counterparts to  
15 achieve tenure upon entering a tenure track job.”

16 (f) The same phenomenon has appeared in non-STEM fields,  
17 as studies indicate that married mothers who earn Ph.D.s are 28  
18 percent less likely to obtain a tenure track job than are married  
19 men with children who earn Ph.D.s.

20 (g) While attending graduate school, many graduate students  
21 move in and out of university employment. This affects their  
22 eligibility for benefits and pregnancy accommodations, except for  
23 their protections under Title IX.

24 (h) Many universities and colleges are not in compliance with  
25 Title IX, and students are unaware that they are protected from  
26 pregnancy discrimination.

27 (i) Preventing pregnancy discrimination against graduate  
28 students is important for both genders so that both men and women  
29 can bond with new children and have a framework with which to  
30 approach these discussions with their academic institutions.

31 SEC. 2. Section 66281.7 is added to the Education Code,  
32 immediately following Section 66281.5, to read:

33 66281.7. (a) It is the policy of the State of California, pursuant  
34 to Section 66251, that all persons, regardless of their sex, should  
35 enjoy freedom from discrimination of any kind, including, but not  
36 limited to, pregnancy discrimination as described in Title IX of  
37 the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. Sec. 1681, et seq.),  
38 in the postsecondary educational institutions of the state.

39 (b) Each of the following requirements shall be applicable to  
40 postsecondary educational institutions in this state:

1 (1) A postsecondary educational institution, including the  
2 faculty, staff, or other employees of the institution, shall not require  
3 a graduate student to take a leave of absence, withdraw from the  
4 graduate program, or limit his or her graduate studies solely due  
5 to pregnancy or pregnancy-related issues.

6 (2) A postsecondary educational institution, including the  
7 faculty, staff, or other employees of the institution, shall reasonably  
8 accommodate pregnant graduate students so they may complete  
9 their graduate courses of study and research. Reasonable  
10 accommodation within the meaning of this subdivision may  
11 include, but is not necessarily limited to, allowances for the  
12 pregnant student's health and safety, such as allowing the student  
13 to maintain a safe distance from hazardous substances, allowing  
14 the student to make up tests and assignments that are missed for  
15 pregnancy-related reasons, or allowing a student to take a leave  
16 of absence. Reasonable accommodation shall include the excusing  
17 of absences that are medically necessary, as required under Title  
18 IX.

19 (3) A graduate student who chooses to take a leave of absence  
20 because she is pregnant or has recently given birth shall be allowed  
21 a period consistent with the policies of the postsecondary  
22 educational institution, or a period of 12 additional months,  
23 whichever period is longer, to prepare for and take preliminary  
24 and qualifying examinations and an extension of at least 12 months  
25 toward normative time to degree while in candidacy for a graduate  
26 degree, unless a longer extension is medically necessary.

27 (4) *A graduate student who is not the birth parent and who*  
28 *chooses to take a leave of absence because of the birth of his or*  
29 *her child shall be allowed a period consistent with the policies of*  
30 *the postsecondary educational institution, or a period of one month,*  
31 *whichever period is longer, to prepare for and take preliminary*  
32 *and qualifying examinations, and an extension of at least one*  
33 *month toward normative time to degree while in candidacy for a*  
34 *graduate degree, unless a longer period or extension is medically*  
35 *necessary to care for his or her partner or their child.*

36 ~~(4)~~

37 (5) An enrolled graduate student in good academic standing  
38 who chooses to take a leave of absence because she is pregnant or  
39 has recently given birth shall return to her program in good  
40 academic standing following a leave period ~~of a duration~~

1 ~~determined by~~ *consistent with the policies of* the postsecondary  
 2 educational institution or of up to ~~two-academic-year-semester~~  
 3 ~~terms or three-academic-year-trimester terms,~~ *one academic year,*  
 4 whichever period is longer, subject to the reasonable administrative  
 5 requirements of the institution, unless there is a medical reason  
 6 for a longer absence, in which case her standing in the graduate  
 7 program shall be maintained during that period of absence.

8 (6) *An enrolled graduate student in good academic standing*  
 9 *who is not the birth parent and who chooses to take a leave of*  
 10 *absence because of the birth of his or her child shall return to his*  
 11 *or her program in good academic standing following a leave period*  
 12 *consistent with the policies of the postsecondary educational*  
 13 *institution, or of up to one month, whichever period is longer,*  
 14 *subject to the reasonable administrative requirements of the*  
 15 *institution.*

16 (c) Each postsecondary educational institution shall have a  
 17 written policy on pregnancy discrimination and procedures for  
 18 addressing pregnancy discrimination complaints under Title IX or  
 19 this section. A copy of this policy shall be made available to  
 20 faculty, staff, and employees in their required training. This policy  
 21 shall be made available to all students attending orientation sessions  
 22 at a postsecondary educational institution.