

Senate Bill No. 1436

CHAPTER 175

An act to amend Section 54953 of the Government Code, relating to open meetings.

[Approved by Governor August 22, 2016. Filed with
Secretary of State August 22, 2016.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1436, Bates. Local agency meetings: local agency executive compensation: oral report of final action recommendation.

The Ralph M. Brown Act requires that all meetings of a legislative body of a local agency be open and public, except that closed sessions may be held under prescribed circumstances. Existing law authorizes the legislative body to hold a closed session to consider the appointment, employment, evaluation of performance, discipline, or dismissal of a public employee, but generally prohibits the closed session from including discussion or action on proposed compensation. Existing law authorizes the legislative body to hold a closed session with the local agency's designated representatives regarding the salaries, salary schedules, or compensation paid in the form of fringe benefits of its represented and unrepresented employees, but prohibits the closed session from including final action on the proposed compensation of one or more unrepresented employees. Existing law prohibits the legislative body from calling a special meeting regarding the salaries, salary schedules, or compensation paid in the form of fringe benefits of a local agency executive, as defined.

This bill, prior to taking final action, would require the legislative body to orally report a summary of a recommendation for a final action on the salaries, salary schedules, or compensation paid in the form of fringe benefits of a local agency executive during the open meeting in which the final action is to be taken.

By imposing new requirements on cities, counties, cities and counties, and special districts, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires local agencies, for the purpose of ensuring public access to the meetings of public bodies and the writings of public officials and agencies, to comply with a statutory enactment that amends or enacts laws relating to public records or open meetings and contains findings demonstrating that the enactment furthers the constitutional requirements relating to this purpose.

This bill would make legislative findings to that effect.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

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

SECTION 1. Section 54953 of the Government Code is amended to read:

54953. (a) All meetings of the legislative body of a local agency shall be open and public, and all persons shall be permitted to attend any meeting of the legislative body of a local agency, except as otherwise provided in this chapter.

(b) (1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the legislative body of a local agency may use teleconferencing for the benefit of the public and the legislative body of a local agency in connection with any meeting or proceeding authorized by law. The teleconferenced meeting or proceeding shall comply with all requirements of this chapter and all otherwise applicable provisions of law relating to a specific type of meeting or proceeding.

(2) Teleconferencing, as authorized by this section, may be used for all purposes in connection with any meeting within the subject matter jurisdiction of the legislative body. All votes taken during a teleconferenced meeting shall be by rollcall.

(3) If the legislative body of a local agency elects to use teleconferencing, it shall post agendas at all teleconference locations and conduct teleconference meetings in a manner that protects the statutory and constitutional rights of the parties or the public appearing before the legislative body of a local agency. Each teleconference location shall be identified in the notice and agenda of the meeting or proceeding, and each teleconference location shall be accessible to the public. During the teleconference, at least a quorum of the members of the legislative body shall participate from locations within the boundaries of the territory over which the local agency exercises jurisdiction, except as provided in subdivision (d). The agenda shall provide an opportunity for members of the public to address the legislative body directly pursuant to Section 54954.3 at each teleconference location.

(4) For the purposes of this section, “teleconference” means a meeting of a legislative body, the members of which are in different locations, connected by electronic means, through either audio or video, or both. Nothing in this section shall prohibit a local agency from providing the public with additional teleconference locations.

(c) (1) No legislative body shall take action by secret ballot, whether preliminary or final.

(2) The legislative body of a local agency shall publicly report any action taken and the vote or abstention on that action of each member present for the action.

(3) Prior to taking final action, the legislative body shall orally report a summary of a recommendation for a final action on the salaries, salary schedules, or compensation paid in the form of fringe benefits of a local agency executive, as defined in subdivision (d) of Section 3511.1, during the open meeting in which the final action is to be taken. This paragraph shall not affect the public's right under the California Public Records Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 6250) of Division 7 of Title 1) to inspect or copy records created or received in the process of developing the recommendation.

(d) (1) Notwithstanding the provisions relating to a quorum in paragraph (3) of subdivision (b), when a health authority conducts a teleconference meeting, members who are outside the jurisdiction of the authority may be counted toward the establishment of a quorum when participating in the teleconference if at least 50 percent of the number of members that would establish a quorum are present within the boundaries of the territory over which the authority exercises jurisdiction, and the health authority provides a teleconference number, and associated access codes, if any, that allows any person to call in to participate in the meeting and that number and access codes are identified in the notice and agenda of the meeting.

(2) Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed as discouraging health authority members from regularly meeting at a common physical site within the jurisdiction of the authority or from using teleconference locations within or near the jurisdiction of the authority. A teleconference meeting for which a quorum is established pursuant to this subdivision shall be subject to all other requirements of this section.

(3) For purposes of this subdivision, a health authority means any entity created pursuant to Sections 14018.7, 14087.31, 14087.35, 14087.36, 14087.38, and 14087.9605 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, any joint powers authority created pursuant to Article 1 (commencing with Section 6500) of Chapter 5 of Division 7 for the purpose of contracting pursuant to Section 14087.3 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, and any advisory committee to a county sponsored health plan licensed pursuant to Chapter 2.2 (commencing with Section 1340) of Division 2 of the Health and Safety Code if the advisory committee has 12 or more members.

(4) This subdivision shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2018.

SEC. 2. The Legislature finds and declares that Section 1 of this act, which amends Section 54953 of the Government Code, furthers, within the meaning of paragraph (7) of subdivision (b) of Section 3 of Article I of the California Constitution, the purposes of that constitutional section as it relates to the right of public access to the meetings of local public bodies or the writings of local public officials and local agencies. Pursuant to paragraph (7) of subdivision (b) of Section 3 of Article I of the California Constitution, the Legislature makes the following findings:

This act ensures that more Californians can meaningfully participate in the meetings of legislative bodies of local agencies.

SEC. 3. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that

may be incurred by a local agency or school district under this act would result from a legislative mandate that is within the scope of paragraph (7) of subdivision (b) of Section 3 of Article I of the California Constitution.