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REPRESENTING SENATE DISTRICT 25

Senate Bill 98 (Perez)

Sending Alerts to Families in Education (SAFE) Act

Summary

SB 98 requires K-12 schools and higher education institutions notify students, staff, and other campus community members when immigration officers are present on campus.

Background

Ensuring access to education in a safe space for all students is largely a state responsibility. As such, California has enacted efforts including AB 699 (O'Donnell, Chap. 493, Stats. 2017), which required the office of the Attorney General to provide guidance policies for public schools and local educational agencies when interacting with immigration enforcement entities. Separately and most recently, the California Attorney General's office has issued separate guidelines for immigrant students and families about their rights and for school officials on complying through state law with immigrant enforcement activities.¹

As part of providing notifications about a range of activities taking place on campus, K-12 schools and higher education institutions operate alert systems to provide notice to the campus communities. School alert systems enhance and promote safety on campus by providing students, faculty, and staff with timely access to important information of time of sensitive events including active shooter events, natural disasters and bomb threats.²

Problem

The presence of immigration enforcement officers can have detrimental effects on the student body and staff – especially for those who may be undocumented or otherwise without permanent status. A 2018 study from the American Psychological Association found that immigrant

youth, especially those in mixed-status families, experience higher levels of anxiety and depression due to fears of deportation and family separation.³ Although schools and higher education institutions in California have guidelines for individuals on their rights and how to engage with immigration enforcement agents when they are present on campus, there are no requirements for school or campus administration to inform the campus community of their presence on campus.

Solution

SB 98 addresses the aforementioned gap by requiring that students and the school are notified of immigration enforcement agents on campus. These timely notifications are imperative for schools to be able to prevent panic, promote a sense of security, and maintain an environment where all students—regardless of immigration status—feel safe and supported.

This bill will give students and educators peace of mind in the classroom while also maintaining the state's commitment that educational institutions are safe places where students can learn, teachers can educate, and schools can be a place exclusively dedicated to teaching and uplifting the next generation.

Sponsors:

UC Student Association
California State Student Association
Student Senate for California Community Colleges
California Faculty Association
Genup

¹ <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-bonta-issues-guidance-educational-rights-immigrant-students-and>

² <https://www.police.ucsb.edu/timely-warnings-and-emergency->

notifications#:~:text=Examples%20of%20types%20of%20situations,(805)%20893%2D3446.

³ <https://www.apa.org/about/policy/immigration-refugee-policy.pdf>

Support

California Association for Bilingual Education
(CABE)

Contact

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