
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Connie Leyva, Chair
2019 - 2020 Regular

Bill No: SB 568 **Hearing Date:** August 28, 2019
Author: Portantino
Version: June 13, 2019
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** No
Consultant: Lynn Lorber

NOTE: This bill was previously heard by this Committee on April 10, 2019. This bill has been amended to replace its contents and this is the first time the bill is being heard in its current form.

Subject: Postsecondary education: student housing: College-Focused Rapid Rehousing Program.

SUMMARY

This bill authorizes Glendale Community College to close on April 24 to observe Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Requires community colleges to provide at least 175 days of instruction. (California Code of Regulations, Title 5, § 55701)
- 2) Requires community colleges to continue in session or close on specified holidays. (Education Code § 79020)
- 3) Requires community colleges to close on the following days:
 - a) January 1st.
 - b) The third Monday in January for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
 - c) February 12th for Lincoln Day.
 - d) The third Monday in February for Washington Day.
 - e) The last Monday in May for Memorial Day.
 - f) July 4th.
 - g) The first Monday in September for Labor Day.
 - h) November 11th for Veterans Day.

- i) The Thursday in November proclaimed by the President as Thanksgiving Day.
 - j) December 25. (EC § 79020)
- 4) Requires community colleges to continue in session on all special or limited holidays appointed by the Governor, if the Governor does not provide whether the community colleges must close on the day. (EC § 79020)
 - 5) Requires community colleges to continue in session on all legal holidays other than those designated (see #2), and requires community colleges to hold proper exercises commemorating the day. (EC § 79020)
 - 6) Authorizes a community college to close, in addition to statutorily required holidays:
 - a) On March 31, known as “César Chávez Day” if the governing board, pursuant to a memorandum of understanding, agrees to close the community college for that purpose.
 - b) On the fourth Friday in September, known as “Native American Day” if the governing board, pursuant to a memorandum of understanding, agrees to close the community college for that purpose. (EC § 79020)
 - 7) Provides that April 24 of each year is the “California Day of Remembrance of the Armenian Genocide,” and the period beginning on the Sunday before that day through the following Sunday are the days of remembrance in this state, and annually be so proclaimed by the Governor, in memory of the 1,500,000 victims who were subjected to torture, starvation, and murder, including death marches into the Syrian desert, by the rulers of the Ottoman Turkish Empire and the exile of more than 500,000 innocent people during the period from 1915 to 1923, inclusive, and in honor of the survivors of those crimes against humanity. (Government Code § 6720)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Authorizes Glendale Community College to close on April 24, known as “Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day” if the governing board, pursuant to a memorandum of understanding, agrees to close the community college for that purpose.
- 2) States legislative findings and declarations that a special statute is necessary and that a general statute cannot be made applicable because of the unique need to acknowledge the large population of students of Armenian descent at Glendale Community College who observe the remembrance of the Armenian Genocide on April 24.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “In California, April 24th is the day Armenians in Glendale and around the world commemorate the Genocide. The 25th Senate District is home to the largest Armenian American population in California, many residing in Glendale. Aligning itself with the Glendale Unified School District, which closes on April 24th, Glendale Community College began to do the same. Unlike the K-12 districts where education code allows districts to more easily manage class schedules so as to not lose average daily attendance funding, community colleges have no such flexibility. It is important that Glendale Community College has the ability to properly commemorate the Genocide and respect its student population.”

- 2) ***Why just Glendale?*** As noted by the author, Glendale Community College hosts a sizable population of students who observe Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day on April 24. Those students do not attend community college on April 24, regardless of whether the campus is open. As a result, Glendale Community College suffers a financial loss for this significant decline in attendance (which matters for any course that uses a positive attendance accounting method, largely non-credit courses but also some short term and other credit courses, as funding for most credit-bearing courses is based on census-date enrollment). This bill would allow Glendale Community College to close, and thereby allow observation of Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day without financially penalizing the community college.

SB 839 (Mitchell), a version of the 2018 Budget Act, included \$517,000 to support Glendale Community College’s Armenian Genocide Day of Remembrance. SB 839 was not the main vehicle for the Budget Act, and therefore remained in the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee. The 2019 Budget Act did not include such funding.

Could the designation of a holiday for only one campus create potential pressure on the Legislature in future years for similar regional requests?

- 3) ***Can community colleges close on any day they choose?*** No. Community colleges are required to operate a minimum number of days, and attendance is counted on all days other than specified holidays or on discretionary days negotiated via a memorandum of understanding between the college administration and employees, in cases permitted by statute. For example, existing law authorizes a community college to close for César Chávez Day and Native American Day pursuant to a memorandum of understanding.

- 4) ***Similar action at the K-12 level.*** Since the 2013-14 school year, the Glendale Unified School District has calendared April 24 as a “student free” day to ensure that students have the opportunity to engage in activities to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

The Los Angeles Unified School District adopted a resolution in April 2019 to commemorate April as the month of “Commemoration of the Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915” and April 24 as “Armenian Genocide

Remembrance Day.” The resolution notes that student absences on April 24 are more than double the typical school day attendance in areas of the district with large Armenian communities.

- 5) ***Related and prior legislation.*** The Legislature has commemorated the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide through the passage of numerous Senate and Assembly Resolutions, including the following within the past few years:
- a) SR 31 (Borgeas, 2019).
 - b) AJR 16 (Luz Rivas, 2019).
 - c) SR 107 (Portantino, 2018).
 - d) AJR 37 (Friedman, Resolution Chapter 75, 2018).
 - e) SR 29 (Portantino, 2017).
 - f) AJR 3 (Nazarian, Resolution Chapter 56, 2017).

SUPPORT

None received

OPPOSITION

None received

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