

Hindu American Foundation
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June 28, 2023

The Honorable Brian Maienschein
California Assembly Judiciary Committee
1020 N Street, Room 104
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: SB-403A – OPPOSE

Dear Chairman Maienschein:

The Hindu American Foundation (HAF), the oldest and largest 501(c)3 nonprofit Hindu American education and civil rights organization, **strongly opposes SB-403A despite the amendments made by the Assembly Judiciary Committee on June 15, 2023.** As an attorney-led organization, we are particularly concerned that SB-403A remains discriminatory on its face, in implementation and in its intention, and will necessitate the denial of fundamental rights to equal protection and due process of only South Asian Californians, the vast majority of whom are of Indian origin.

While the Assembly Judiciary Committee's removal of the racist tropes blanketly singling out and attributing horrific, unlawful and criminal behavior to South Asians in Section 1 is a step in the right direction, the fact remains that the creation of caste as a new, standalone category is one that singles out and targets South Asians for arbitrary and disparate treatment under the law.

We do, however, support the proposal by Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Legislative Caucus Chair Asm. Evan Low and AAPI Legislative Caucus Member Asm. Alex Lee to pause the bill and study the extent of caste discrimination.

In the event, the Committee chooses not to pause the bill, the Hindu American Foundation urges the Assembly Judiciary Committee to **amend SB403A by removing "caste" as a new, standalone category and instead clarifying the category of "ancestry" to include broad, facially neutral terms, including but not limited to lineage, parentage, birthplace, social origin, inherited social class, origin or status.** These broad, facially neutral terms **cover facets of ethnically-associated identities such as "caste," "tribe," "clan," and "kin group" WITHOUT singling out and targeting any Californian on the basis of their race, ethnicity or religion and still achieve the goal of better protecting against various forms of intra-community discrimination.**

SB-403A Denies South Asian Californians Equal Protection Under the Law

Laws must be impartial and apply to all equally. SB-403A as amended on June 15 continues to be a stark departure from this well-established precedent by unfairly targeting and maligning South Asian Californians for disparate treatment on the basis of their national origin, ethnicity and ancestry, thereby



undermining the very laws it seeks to amend. The most recently amended SB-403A continues to be problematic for its insistence on adding a new category that is strongly linked to one ethnic group.

Neutrality is a bedrock of Equal Protection and federal and state anti-discrimination laws. Although the Senate Legal Analysis determined caste was neutral insofar as Californians of any caste background, ie. oppressed or non-oppressed/oppressor could file a claim of caste discrimination, the analysis failed to note that the category of caste itself is not a facially neutral category and the declarations disparaging a class based on its national origin indicative of a discriminatory intent to target that class and deny equal protection.

Per the previous versions of the bill text, “*Caste discrimination is present across South Asia and the South Asian diaspora;*” “*...caste systems are strongly associated with South Asia;*” and “*California caste-oppressed individuals who originate from South Asia, including India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Pakistan...*” **No other existing protected category under the Unruh Civil Rights Act — sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, or sexual orientation — is defined or declared as being strongly associated with a particular ethnicity or national origin.** Moreover, in practice, SB-403A necessitates that the state presume all South Asians identify with or by caste. These presumptions about only South Asians at the onset of day to day interactions, as well as any investigation into alleged caste discrimination, raise serious doubts of impartiality, fairness and due process of law.

Every Californian has a race, an age, a color, an ancestry, a sex, a medical history. Not every Californian is associated with or presumed to have a caste. The term “caste” is predominantly—if not exclusively—equated with South Asians, and therefore inconsistent with equal protection. **In fact, this false equivalency is institutionalized by the State of California through the [Education Code](#) where caste is mandatorily taught to all sixth grade public school students as an inherent aspect of Indian society and Hinduism in the state’s Social Studies content standards.**

SB-403A Denies South Asian Californians Due Process of Law

SB-403A raises serious due process concerns. Laws must give people of ordinary intelligence reasonable understanding of what is prohibited, provide adequate safeguards and have explicit standards to avoid arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement. SB-403A fails on all three counts.

There is no agreed upon academic nor legal definition of caste. Even under Indian law, caste is an administrative designation and does not have a consistent definition of caste. Since the time of its independence, the Government of India has recognized more than 3,000 designated “castes.” When the Government of India designates a member of a “caste” or community, they become eligible for certain allowances under the law and affirmative action programs. Nonetheless, SB-403A attempts to define “caste” through verbal gymnastics.



Absent a historical basis to regulate caste in the United States and lack of a consensus or workable definition:

- Will the state and those implementing California's ban on caste discrimination rely on Indian law or the laws of other South Asian countries to make determinations about the "inherited status" of South Asians living or working in California?
- Will foreign laws and designations be applied to second, third or fourth generation South Asian Californians?
- Will South Asians in California with no caste identity be required to have a working understanding of Indian law and its administrative caste designations?

The legal uncertainty and morass SB-403A promises to increase the liability of the state of California and expose the state to constitutional challenges for forcing ordinary South Asians to adhere to and be regulated by a discriminatory law that violates equal protection in applying only to them because of their national origin, ethnicity or ancestry. SB-403A will also significantly increase the cost and ease of doing business in the state as those entities responsible for abiding by non-discrimination laws take on the extraordinary burden and liability of implementing California's discriminatory law.

Discriminatory Legislative Intent

Apart from the vague and convoluted definition of "caste" in the June 15 version of the bill, there are a number of indicators in the procedural history that indicate an impermissible, discriminatory motive to disparage and harm South Asians -- an act of legislative malfeasance which will be subject to judicial scrutiny.

These indicators include the following:

1. SB403 explicitly equates caste with South Asians and singles out several other ethnic minorities;
2. SB403 explicitly makes racist, negative and false declarations about the South Asian diaspora and South Asians engaging in unlawful, even criminal conduct;
3. SB403 and SB403A admit that caste discrimination is already barred under existing law, yet, adds a new facially discriminatory category that thus punitively applies to only South Asians and particular ethnic communities.
4. SB403 and SB403A and Senator Wahab admit that caste discrimination is already barred under existing law, yet insist on adding an ethnically-associated category like "caste", in spite of facially-neutral, generally applicable terminology from the definition itself, ie. "inherited social status", being available.
5. A previous version of SB403 declared caste-oppressed South Asians, as "Dalits and Adivasis", demonstrating an explicit discriminatory intent to designate certain South Asians, ie. non-Dalit and non-Adivasis, as "oppressors."
6. Senator Wahab continues to make unwarranted, baseless and racist public statements about South Asians engaging in unlawful, even criminal behavior.



7. Senator Wahab has made numerous false or unsubstantiated claims about the extent of caste discrimination in California based solely on anonymous anecdotes and attributing guilt to defendant(s) in the case, *California Department of Fair Employment and Housing v. Cisco Systems Inc.*, prior to the case being adjudicated.

If Senator Wahab's intent is not to condemn and harm South Asians, but a genuine attempt to address all intra-ethnic or intra-racial forms of discrimination, then HAF's proposed amendments to clarify that ancestry with facially neutral factors applicable to all races or ethnicities should be an acceptable "fix."

Conclusion

There are an estimated 3.2 million Hindu Americans of Indian origin across the nation, with some 528,000 living here in the state of California. California is also home to over 120 Hindu temples, religious centers and cultural centers.

Despite this numerical presence and the many contributions of the community, Indian and Hindu Americans comprise less than 1.5% of the state's population and face significant negative stereotypes and misconceptions about their national origin, ethnicity, ancestry and religion, making them targets for hate crimes, discrimination, harassment and bullying. SB-403A seeks to codify these negative stereotypes and stigmas into law.

California last passed a law targeting select ethnic communities on the basis of national origin nearly a century ago, with the California Alien Land Laws of 1920, which sought to dispossess "aliens ineligible for citizenship" of agricultural land and long-term leases, impacting Japanese, Chinese, Korean and Indian immigrant farmers throughout the state. These discriminatory laws passed by xenophobic Californians preceded the United States Constitution's 14th Amendment, which conferred the rights to due process and equal protection to all people under the law, regardless of their race, ethnicity or national origin.

Today, it would be inconceivable that California would consider such blatantly discriminatory laws. SB-403A stands out as a striking departure from the California Assembly's commitment to progressive policies that protect and celebrate the state's pluralistic ethos.

For the reasons detailed herein, we strongly oppose SB-403A.

Should you have any questions, we can be reached at legal@hinduamerican.org.

Best,

Suhag A. Shukla, Esq.
Executive Director

Samir Kalra, Esq.
Managing Director | Fremont, CA Resident



Nikhil Joshi, Esq.

Cofounder | Board Certified as a specialist in Labor and Employment Law

Additional Resources

Appendices

- [APPENDIX A - Caste Related Data](#)
- [APPENDIX B - Prevalent definitions of “caste”](#)
- [APPENDIX C - HAF’s Proposed SB-403A from June 15, 2023 Amendments Summary](#)

Articles on the Legal Flaws of SB-403A

- [“Preliminary Thoughts on Potential Constitutional Flaws in SB 403, A California Proposal to Prohibit Caste Discrimination.”](#) *Justia Legal Analysis and Commentary*, Vikram David Amar, May 16, 2023
- [“Caste Bill Would Harm California’s South Asian Communities.”](#) *The Mercury News*, Barbara A. McGraw, April 20, 2023
- [“Not All California Innovations Are Good: Stop SB 403.”](#) *Capitol Weekly*, Samir Kalra, May 22, 2023
- [“Why California’s Caste Discrimination Bill Is Itself Discriminatory.”](#) *Religious News Service (RNS)*, Suhag Shukla, May 17, 2023

Why Caste Policies are Unconstitutional

- [Memorandum on Caste as a Protected Category is Unconstitutional](#)

Challenges to Unlawful Caste Policies

- [California Caste-Bias Case Misrepresents Hinduism, Suit Says](#)
- [Professors at California State University take legal action against school’s unconstitutional caste policy](#)
- [Brown University Discriminates Against South Asians - WSJ](#)

Data on Caste and Caste Discrimination in the US

- [Social Realities of Indian Americans: Results From the 2020 Indian American Attitudes Survey](#), Carnegie Endowment, Johns Hopkins University, and University of Pennsylvania
- [Yes, Saying Caste is Linked to Hinduism Leads to Bullying of Hindu Students](#)

No Reliable Definition of Caste

- [Census in Colonial India and the Birth of Caste](#). Samarendra, Padmanabh. *Economic and Political Weekly*, xlv:33, August 13, 2011, pp. 51-58
- [Caste Confusion and Census Enumeration in Colonial India, 1871–1921](#). Walby, Kevin & Haan, Michael. (2012). *Histoire sociale/Social history*. 45. 301-318. 10.1353/his.2012.0026. Retrieved from researchgate.net
- [The Caste Conundrum: No universal definition - Hindu American Foundation](#)



APPENDIX A

Caste Related Data

Though often presented as a growing problem in the United States, the only authoritative survey on the social realities faced by Indian Americans that examined the issue of caste identities and caste discrimination was reported by [Johns Hopkins University](#), [the University of Pennsylvania](#), and [the Carnegie Endowment](#) in 2021, finding that while discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, color and national origin is reported as quite common, allegations of discrimination on the basis of caste is exceedingly rare.

The study reveals four important findings related to caste in America:

1. Half of Indian Americans surveyed reported facing alleged discrimination. The basis of alleged discrimination reported was color (30%), gender (18%), religion (18%) and national origin (1%).
2. Only 5% of those surveyed reported encountering alleged discrimination on the basis of caste, with almost half of those respondents reporting the perpetrator of the alleged discrimination being of non-Indian origin, indicating that caste may have been conflated with some other factor or basis.
3. A majority of Hindu respondents (53%) do not identify with any caste group at all.
4. Within the group that does identify with a caste, there is a significantly lower number of U.S.-born Hindu Indian Americans who identify with a caste group (34%) versus those that are foreign-born (53%), which may indicate that caste identification becomes increasingly less relevant with every generation.

It is also important to note that both statistically and anecdotally, caste becomes less and less salient to the identities of subsequent generations of Indian and Hindu Americans and through inter-community, inter-linguistic, inter-ethnic and inter-racial marriage. Nonetheless, even if caste discrimination occurs rarely, it should be adjudicated and remedied under existing laws prohibiting ethnicity or ancestry-based discrimination.



APPENDIX B

Prevalent definitions of “caste”

Type	Source	Definition of "Caste"	Web.Archive Link
California State Law	California Social Studies Content Standards	Standard 6.5 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilizations of India . 1. Locate and describe the major river system and discuss the physical setting that supported the rise of this civilization. 2. Discuss the significance of the Aryan invasions. 3. Explain the major beliefs and practices of Brahmanism in India and how they evolved into early Hinduism . 4. Outline the social structure of the caste system . 5. Know the life and moral teachings of Buddha and how Buddhism spread in India, Ceylon, and Central Asia. 6. Describe the growth of the Maurya empire and the political and moral achievements of the emperor Asoka. 7. Discuss important aesthetic and intellectual traditions (e.g., Sanskrit literature, including the Bhagavad Gita; medicine; metallurgy; and mathematics, including Hindu Arabic numerals and the zero).	
Encyclopedia	Oxford Reference	Each of the hereditary classes of Hindu society, distinguished by relative degrees of ritual purity or pollution and of social status. "members of the lower castes"	https://web.archive.org/save/oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780198609810.01.0001/acref-9780198609810-e-1344;jsessionid=1693F2F1AEBC9AD4167876395E9252A0
Dictionary	Merriam-Webster Dictionary	One of the hereditary social classes in Hinduism that restrict the occupation of their members and their association with the members of other castes	https://web.archive.org/save/https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/caste
Encyclopedia	Wikipedia	A caste is a fixed social group into which an individual is born within a particular system of social stratification: a caste system. Within such a system, individuals are expected to: marry exclusively within the same caste (endogamy), follow lifestyles often linked to a particular occupation, hold a ritual status observed within a hierarchy, and interact with others based on cultural notions of exclusion, with certain castes considered as either more pure or more polluted than others.[1][2][3][4] Its paradigmatic ethnographic example is the division of India's Hindu society into rigid social groups. Its roots lie in south Asia's ancient history and it still exists.[1][5]	https://web.archive.org/save/https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caste
Encyclopedia	Britannica	caste, any of the ranked, hereditary, endogamous social groups, often linked with occupation, that together constitute traditional societies in South Asia, particularly among Hindus in India . Although sometimes used to designate similar groups in other societies, the "caste system" is uniquely developed in Hindu societies.	https://web.archive.org/web/20230628225903/https://www.britannica.com/topic/caste-social-differentiation
Dictionary	Cambridge	A system of dividing Hindu society into classes, or any of these classes:	https://web.archive.org/save/https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/caste



Dictionary	Collins English Dictionary	A caste is one of the traditional social classes into which people are divided in a Hindu society. In the secretariat, there is a mix of those from the lower and upper castes.	https://web.archive.org/web/20230628230108/https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/caste
Dictionary	Oxford Learners Dictionary	Any of the four main divisions of Hindu society, originally those made according to functions in society the caste system high-caste Brahmins	https://web.archive.org/web/20230628230329/https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/caste?q=caste
Dictionary	Macmillan Dictionary	One of the traditional social classes that people were born into in Hindu society, or the system of having these classes	https://web.archive.org/web/20230628231420/https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/caste
Dictionary	The Free Dictionary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any of the hereditary, endogamous social classes or subclasses of traditional Hindu society, stratified according to Hindu ritual purity, especially the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra castes. 2. A social class separated from others by distinctions of hereditary rank, profession, or wealth. 3a. A social system or the principle of grading society based on castes. 3b. The social position or status conferred by a system based on castes: lose caste by doing work beneath one's station. 4. A specialized level in a colony of social insects, such as ants, in which the members, such as workers or soldiers, carry out a specific function. 	https://web.archive.org/web/20230628231529/https://www.thefreedictionary.com/caste
Dictionary	Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One of the fixed social classes, which cannot be changed, into which people are born in India 2 A group of people who have the same position in society 	https://web.archive.org/web/20230628231654/https://www.lodonline.com/dictionary/caste
Dictionary	American Heritage Dictionary	Any of the hereditary, endogamous social classes or subclasses of traditional Hindu society , stratified according to Hindu ritual purity, especially the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra castes.	https://web.archive.org/web/20230628232956/https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=caste
Dictionary	Real Academia Española Diccionario de la Lengua Española	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. f. Ascendencia o linaje. U. también referido a los irracionales. 2. f. En la India, grupo social al que se pertenece por nacimiento, y que, dentro de una etnia, se diferencia por su rango e impone la endogamia. 3. f. En algunas sociedades, grupo que forma una clase especial y tiende a permanecer separado de los demás por su raza, religión, etc. 	https://web.archive.org/web/20230628233208/https://dle.rae.es/casta?m=form



APPENDIX C

Proposed SB-403A from June 15, 2023 Amendments Summary

Hindu American Foundation (HAF)

1. Removes caste as a new, standalone category, the only nondiscrimination category to be neither facially neutral nor generally applicable. Every Californian has a race, an age, a color, an ancestry, a sex, a medical history. Not every Californian has a caste. The term “caste” is predominantly—if not exclusively—associated with South Asians, and therefore inconsistent with equal protection. Similarly, we would oppose terms such as “tribe” “clan” or “kin group” as new, standalone categories given their strong associations with particular ethnic and racial groups.
2. Clarifies what “ancestry” covers with facially-neutral, generally applicable factors that apply to all Californians regardless of race, ethnicity or religion, including but not limited to birthplace, community, descent, family, heritage, parentage, or inherited social class, origin or status. These factors relate to caste, tribe, clan, kin group and other ethnic and racial perceived differences without singling out or condemning any one race or ethnicity. Similar to the clarification in previous bills that sex includes gender and that gender includes gender expression and gender identity, HAF’s proposed amendments clarify expansively various factors that are entailed by “ancestry.”

ALL HAF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS BELOW ARE IN PURPLE

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 15, 2023

AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 17, 2023

AMENDED IN SENATE MARCH 22, 2023

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2023–2024 REGULAR SESSION

SENATE BILL NO. 403



Introduced by Senator Wahab

(Coauthor: Assembly Member Bains)

February 09, 2023

An act to amend Section 51 of the Civil Code, to amend Sections 200 and 210.2 of, and to add Section 210.4 to, the Education Code, and to amend Sections 11135, 12920, 12921, 12926, 12930, 12931, 12940, 12944, 12955, 12955.8, 12956.1, 12956.2, and 12993 of the Government Code, relating to discrimination.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 403, as amended, Wahab. Discrimination on the basis of **ancestrycaste**.

Existing law, the Unruh Civil Rights Act, provides that all persons within the jurisdiction of this state are free and equal, and no matter what their sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, citizenship, primary language, or immigration status are entitled to the full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services in all business establishments of every kind whatsoever.

This bill would additionally provide that all persons within the jurisdiction of the state are so entitled regardless of their **ancestrycaste**, as defined.

Existing law states the policy of the State of California to afford all persons in public schools, regardless of their disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or specified other characteristics, equal rights and opportunities in the educational institutions of the state, and states that the purpose of related existing law is to prohibit acts that are contrary to that policy and to provide remedies therefor.



This bill would additionally **clarify ancestry include—caste**, as defined, as a protected characteristic in that policy statement.

Existing law prohibits discrimination in any program or activity that is conducted, operated, or administered by the state, or by any state agency, that is funded directly by the state, or that receives any financial assistance from the state, based upon specified personal characteristics.

This bill would also prohibit discrimination based upon **ancestrycaste**, as **clarified defined**.

Existing law, the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA), establishes the Civil Rights Department to enforce civil rights laws with respect to housing and employment, as prescribed. The FEHA declares the public policy of the state that it is necessary to protect and safeguard the right of all persons to seek, obtain, and hold employment without discrimination on account of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, reproductive health decisionmaking, or military and veteran status. The FEHA recognizes and declares to be a civil right the opportunity to seek, obtain, and hold employment without discrimination because of a specified characteristic. The FEHA makes certain discriminatory employment practices based on those characteristics unlawful.

This bill would revise FEHA to prohibit prescribed discriminatory employment practices on account of **ancestry as clarified caste**.

The FEHA further declares the practice of discrimination because of race, **caste**, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, source of income, disability, veteran or military status, or genetic information in housing accommodations to be against public policy. The FEHA recognizes and declares to be a civil right the opportunity to seek, obtain, and hold housing without discrimination because of a specified characteristic. The FEHA makes certain discriminatory housing practices based on those characteristics unlawful, including to discriminate through public or private land use practices, decisions, and authorizations because of a specified characteristic, including the existence of a restrictive covenant, regardless of whether accompanied by a statement that the restrictive covenant is repealed or void. The FEHA authorizes a person who holds an ownership interest of record in property that they believe is the subject of an unlawfully restrictive covenant, as



specified, to record a Restrictive Covenant Modification, which is required to include a copy of the original document with the illegal language stricken.

This bill would revise these FEHA housing provisions to include protection for discrimination because of **ancestry as clarified caste**.

This bill would make additional similar changes relating to the duties and powers of the department and the construction of the FEHA and would **clarify "ancestry" define "caste"** for purposes of the FEHA.

DIGEST KEY

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

BILL TEXT

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

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

~~(a) "Caste" refers to an individual's perceived position in a system of social stratification on the basis of inherited status. A system of social stratification on the basis of inherited status may be characterized by factors that may include, but are not limited to, inability or restricted ability to alter inherited status; socially enforced restrictions on marriage, private and public segregation, and discrimination; and social exclusion on the basis of perceived status.~~

~~(b) Caste discrimination is present across South Asia and the South Asian diaspora, as well as around the world. While caste systems are strongly associated with South Asia, similar systems exist in regions including, but not limited to, South America, Asia, and Africa. Caste discrimination is also found across communities of religious practice.~~

~~(c) Caste discrimination at work and school continues to exist in California.~~

~~(d) Caste discrimination manifests as workplace discrimination, housing discrimination, gender based violence, and other physical and psychological forms of violence.~~



~~(e)Caste discrimination occurs across industries, including technology, construction, restaurant, and domestic work. In these sectors, caste discrimination has included harassment, bias, wage theft, and even human trafficking.~~

~~(f)Caste is today inextricably intertwined with existing legal protections in state and federal civil rights laws such that discrimination based on one's caste is effectively discrimination based on the intersection of other protected identities. However, because of the grave discrimination caste oppressed Californians face, these existing protections must be made explicit.~~

~~(g)The~~

The amendments in this act are declarative of and clarify existing law. This act shall not be construed to mean that **caste** discrimination **on the basis of ancestry as clarified** is not already prohibited under existing law, including by protections for religion, ancestry, national origin, ethnicity, race, color, or any other protected characteristic under existing law.

~~(h)The State of California is committed to recognizing the dignity of all its residents, students, workers, and visitors. This recognition includes the right to reside, work, and travel without suffering prejudice or discrimination.~~

SEC. 2. Section 51 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

51. (a) This section shall be known, and may be cited, as the Unruh Civil Rights Act.

(b) All persons within the jurisdiction of this state are free and equal, and no matter what their sex, race, **caste**, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, citizenship, primary language, or immigration status are entitled to the full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services in all business establishments of every kind whatsoever.

(c) This section shall not be construed to confer any right or privilege on a person that is conditioned or limited by law or that is applicable alike to persons of every sex, color, race, **caste**, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, citizenship, primary language, or immigration status, or to persons regardless of their genetic information.

(d) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require any construction, alteration, repair, structural or otherwise, or modification of any sort whatsoever, beyond that construction, alteration, repair, or modification that is otherwise required by other provisions of law, to any new or existing establishment, facility, building, improvement, or any other structure, nor shall anything in this section be construed



to augment, restrict, or alter in any way the authority of the State Architect to require construction, alteration, repair, or modifications that the State Architect otherwise possesses pursuant to other laws.

(e) For purposes of this section:

(1) "Disability" means any mental or physical disability as defined in Sections 12926 and 12926.1 of the Government Code.

(2) (A) "Genetic information" means, with respect to any individual, information about any of the following:

(i) The individual's genetic tests.

(ii) The genetic tests of family members of the individual.

(iii) The manifestation of a disease or disorder in family members of the individual.

(B) "Genetic information" includes any request for, or receipt of, genetic services, or participation in clinical research that includes genetic services, by an individual or any family member of the individual.

(C) "Genetic information" does not include information about the sex or age of any individual.

(3) "Medical condition" has the same meaning as defined in subdivision (i) of Section 12926 of the Government Code.

(4) "Religion" includes all aspects of religious belief, observance, and practice.

(5) "Sex" includes, but is not limited to, pregnancy, childbirth, or medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth. "Sex" also includes, but is not limited to, a person's gender. "Gender" means sex, and includes a person's gender identity and gender expression. "Gender expression" means a person's gender-related appearance and behavior whether or not stereotypically associated with the person's assigned sex at birth.

(6) "Sex, race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, citizenship, primary language, or immigration status" includes a perception that the person has any particular characteristic or characteristics within the listed categories or that the



person is associated with a person who has, or is perceived to have, any particular characteristic or characteristics within the listed categories.

(7) "Sexual orientation" has the same meaning as defined in subdivision (s) of Section 12926 of the Government Code.

(8) **"Ancestry" means an individual's perceived or actual birthplace, community, descent, family, heritage, parentage and inherited social class, origin or status.** ~~"Caste" means an individual's perceived position in a system of social stratification on the basis of inherited status. "A system of social stratification on the basis of inherited status" may be characterized by factors that may include, but are not limited to, inability or restricted ability to alter inherited status; socially enforced restrictions on marriage, private and public segregation, and discrimination; and social exclusion on the basis of perceived status.~~

(f) A violation of the right of any individual under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336) shall also constitute a violation of this section.

(g) Verification of immigration status and any discrimination based upon verified immigration status, where required by federal law, shall not constitute a violation of this section.

(h) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the provision of services or documents in a language other than English, beyond that which is otherwise required by other provisions of federal, state, or local law, including Section 1632.

SEC. 3. Section 200 of the Education Code is amended to read:

200. It is the policy of the State of California to afford all persons in public schools, regardless of their disability, ~~caste~~, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, including immigration status, equal rights, and opportunities in the educational institutions of the state. The purpose of this chapter is to prohibit acts that are contrary to that policy and to provide remedies therefor.

SEC. 4. Section 210.2 of the Education Code is amended to read:

210.2. "Disability, ~~caste~~, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained



in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code” includes a perception that the person has any of those characteristics or that the person is associated with a person who has, or is perceived to have, any of those characteristics.

SEC. 5. Section 210.4 is added to the Education Code, to read:

210.4. “Ancestry” means an individual’s perceived or actual birthplace, community, descent, family, heritage, parentage and inherited social class, origin or status. “Caste” means an individual’s perceived position in a system of social stratification on the basis of inherited status. “A system of social stratification on the basis of inherited status” may be characterized by factors that may include, but are not limited to, inability or restricted ability to alter inherited status; socially enforced restrictions on marriage, private and public segregation, and discrimination; and social exclusion on the basis of perceived status.

SEC. 6. Section 11135 of the Government Code is amended to read:

11135. (a) No person in the State of California shall, on the basis of sex, race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, ethnic group identification, age, mental disability, physical disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, or sexual orientation, be unlawfully denied full and equal access to the benefits of, or be unlawfully subjected to discrimination under, any program or activity that is conducted, operated, or administered by the state or by any state agency, is funded directly by the state, or receives any financial assistance from the state. Notwithstanding Section 11000, this section applies to the California State University.

(b) With respect to discrimination on the basis of disability, programs and activities subject to subdivision (a) shall meet the protections and prohibitions contained in Section 202 of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. Sec. 12132), and the federal rules and regulations adopted in implementation thereof, except that if the laws of this state prescribe stronger protections and prohibitions, the programs and activities subject to subdivision (a) shall be subject to the stronger protections and prohibitions.

(c) The protected bases referenced in this section have the same meanings as those terms are defined in Section 12926.



(d) The protected bases used in this section include a perception that a person has any of those characteristics or that the person is associated with a person who has, or is perceived to have, any of those characteristics.

SEC. 7. Section 12920 of the Government Code is amended to read:

12920. It is hereby declared as the public policy of this state that it is necessary to protect and safeguard the right and opportunity of all persons to seek, obtain, and hold employment without discrimination or abridgment on account of race, ~~caste~~, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, reproductive health decisionmaking, or military and veteran status.

It is recognized that the practice of denying employment opportunity and discriminating in the terms of employment for these reasons foments domestic strife and unrest, deprives the state of the fullest utilization of its capacities for development and advancement, and substantially and adversely affects the interests of employees, employers, and the public in general.

Further, the practice of discrimination because of race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, source of income, disability, veteran or military status, or genetic information in housing accommodations is declared to be against public policy.

It is the purpose of this part to provide effective remedies that will eliminate these discriminatory practices.

This part shall be deemed an exercise of the police power of the state for the protection of the welfare, health, and peace of the people of this state.

SEC. 8. Section 12921 of the Government Code is amended to read:

12921. (a) The opportunity to seek, obtain, and hold employment without discrimination because of race, ~~caste~~, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, reproductive health decisionmaking, or veteran or military status is hereby recognized as and declared to be a civil right.



(b) The opportunity to seek, obtain, and hold housing without discrimination because of race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, source of income, disability, veteran or military status, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by Section 51 of the Civil Code is hereby recognized as and declared to be a civil right.

SEC. 9. Section 12926 of the Government Code is amended to read:

12926. As used in this part in connection with unlawful practices, unless a different meaning clearly appears from the context:

(a) "Affirmative relief" or "prospective relief" includes the authority to order reinstatement of an employee, awards of backpay, reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses, hiring, transfers, reassignments, grants of tenure, promotions, cease and desist orders, posting of notices, training of personnel, testing, expunging of records, reporting of records, and any other similar relief that is intended to correct unlawful practices under this part.

(b) "Age" refers to the chronological age of any individual who has reached a 40th birthday.

(c) Except as provided by Section 12926.05, "employee" does not include any individual employed by that person's parent, spouse, or child or any individual employed under a special license in a nonprofit sheltered workshop or rehabilitation facility.

(d) "Employer" includes any person regularly employing five or more persons, or any person acting as an agent of an employer, directly or indirectly, the state or any political or civil subdivision of the state, and cities, except as follows:

"Employer" does not include a religious association or corporation not organized for private profit.

(e) "Employment agency" includes any person undertaking for compensation to procure employees or opportunities to work.

(f) "Essential functions" means the fundamental job duties of the employment position the individual with a disability holds or desires. "Essential functions" does not include the marginal functions of the position.



(1) A job function may be considered essential for any of several reasons, including, but not limited to, any one or more of the following:

(A) The function may be essential because the reason the position exists is to perform that function.

(B) The function may be essential because of the limited number of employees available among whom the performance of that job function can be distributed.

(C) The function may be highly specialized, so that the incumbent in the position is hired based on expertise or the ability to perform a particular function.

(2) Evidence of whether a particular function is essential includes, but is not limited to, the following:

(A) The employer's judgment as to which functions are essential.

(B) Written job descriptions prepared before advertising or interviewing applicants for the job.

(C) The amount of time spent on the job performing the function.

(D) The consequences of not requiring the incumbent to perform the function.

(E) The terms of a collective bargaining agreement.

(F) The work experiences of past incumbents in the job.

(G) The current work experience of incumbents in similar jobs.

(g) (1) "Genetic information" means, with respect to any individual, information about any of the following:

(A) The individual's genetic tests.

(B) The genetic tests of family members of the individual.

(C) The manifestation of a disease or disorder in family members of the individual.

(2) "Genetic information" includes any request for, or receipt of, genetic services, or participation in clinical research that includes genetic services, by an individual or any family member of the individual.



(3) “Genetic information” does not include information about the sex or age of any individual.

(h) “Labor organization” includes any organization that exists and is constituted for the purpose, in whole or in part, of collective bargaining or of dealing with employers concerning grievances, terms or conditions of employment, or of other mutual aid or protection.

(i) “Medical condition” means either of the following:

(1) Any health impairment related to or associated with a diagnosis of cancer or a record or history of cancer.

(2) Genetic characteristics. For purposes of this section, “genetic characteristics” means either of the following:

(A) Any scientifically or medically identifiable gene or chromosome, or combination or alteration thereof, that is known to be a cause of a disease or disorder in a person or that person’s offspring, or that is determined to be associated with a statistically increased risk of development of a disease or disorder, and that is presently not associated with any symptoms of any disease or disorder.

(B) Inherited characteristics that may derive from the individual or family member, that are known to be a cause of a disease or disorder in a person or that person’s offspring, or that are determined to be associated with a statistically increased risk of development of a disease or disorder, and that are presently not associated with any symptoms of any disease or disorder.

(j) “Mental disability” includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

(1) Having any mental or psychological disorder or condition, such as intellectual disability, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, or specific learning disabilities, that limits a major life activity. For purposes of this section:

(A) “Limits” shall be determined without regard to mitigating measures, such as medications, assistive devices, or reasonable accommodations, unless the mitigating measure itself limits a major life activity.

(B) A mental or psychological disorder or condition limits a major life activity if it makes the achievement of the major life activity difficult.



(C) “Major life activities” shall be broadly construed and shall include physical, mental, and social activities and working.

(2) Any other mental or psychological disorder or condition not described in paragraph (1) that requires special education or related services.

(3) Having a record or history of a mental or psychological disorder or condition described in paragraph (1) or (2), which is known to the employer or other entity covered by this part.

(4) Being regarded or treated by the employer or other entity covered by this part as having, or having had, any mental condition that makes achievement of a major life activity difficult.

(5) Being regarded or treated by the employer or other entity covered by this part as having, or having had, a mental or psychological disorder or condition that has no present disabling effect, but that may become a mental disability as described in paragraph (1) or (2).

“Mental disability” does not include sexual behavior disorders, compulsive gambling, kleptomania, pyromania, or psychoactive substance use disorders resulting from the current unlawful use of controlled substances or other drugs.

(k) “Veteran or military status” means a member or veteran of the United States Armed Forces, United States Armed Forces Reserve, the United States National Guard, and the California National Guard.

(l) “On the bases enumerated in this part” means or refers to discrimination on the basis of one or more of the following: race, ~~caste~~, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, age, sexual orientation, reproductive health decisionmaking, or veteran or military status.

(m) “Physical disability” includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

(1) Having any physiological disease, disorder, condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss that does both of the following:

(A) Affects one or more of the following body systems: neurological, immunological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory, including speech organs,



cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, hemic and lymphatic, skin, and endocrine.

(B) Limits a major life activity. For purposes of this section:

(i) "Limits" shall be determined without regard to mitigating measures such as medications, assistive devices, prosthetics, or reasonable accommodations, unless the mitigating measure itself limits a major life activity.

(ii) A physiological disease, disorder, condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss limits a major life activity if it makes the achievement of the major life activity difficult.

(iii) "Major life activities" shall be broadly construed and includes physical, mental, and social activities and working.

(2) Any other health impairment not described in paragraph (1) that requires special education or related services.

(3) Having a record or history of a disease, disorder, condition, cosmetic disfigurement, anatomical loss, or health impairment described in paragraph (1) or (2), which is known to the employer or other entity covered by this part.

(4) Being regarded or treated by the employer or other entity covered by this part as having, or having had, any physical condition that makes achievement of a major life activity difficult.

(5) Being regarded or treated by the employer or other entity covered by this part as having, or having had, a disease, disorder, condition, cosmetic disfigurement, anatomical loss, or health impairment that has no present disabling effect but may become a physical disability as described in paragraph (1) or (2).

(6) "Physical disability" does not include sexual behavior disorders, compulsive gambling, kleptomania, pyromania, or psychoactive substance use disorders resulting from the current unlawful use of controlled substances or other drugs.

(n) Notwithstanding subdivisions (j) and (m), if the definition of "disability" used in the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336) would result in broader protection of the civil rights of individuals with a mental disability or physical disability, as defined in subdivision (j) or (m), or would include any medical condition not included within those definitions, then that broader protection



or coverage shall be deemed incorporated by reference into, and shall prevail over conflicting provisions of, the definitions in subdivisions (j) and (m).

(o) "Race, ~~caste~~, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, age, sexual orientation, reproductive health decisionmaking, or veteran or military status" includes a perception that the person has any of those characteristics or that the person is associated with a person who has, or is perceived to have, any of those characteristics.

(p) "Reasonable accommodation" may include either of the following:

(1) Making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities.

(2) Job restructuring, part-time or modified work schedules, reassignment to a vacant position, acquisition or modification of equipment or devices, adjustment or modifications of examinations, training materials or policies, the provision of qualified readers or interpreters, and other similar accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

(q) "Religious creed," "religion," "religious observance," "religious belief," and "creed" include all aspects of religious belief, observance, and practice, including religious dress and grooming practices. "Religious dress practice" shall be construed broadly to include the wearing or carrying of religious clothing, head or face coverings, jewelry, artifacts, and any other item that is part of an individual observing a religious creed. "Religious grooming practice" shall be construed broadly to include all forms of head, facial, and body hair that are part of an individual observing a religious creed.

(r) (1) "Sex" includes, but is not limited to, the following:

(A) Pregnancy or medical conditions related to pregnancy.

(B) Childbirth or medical conditions related to childbirth.

(C) Breastfeeding or medical conditions related to breastfeeding.

(2) "Sex" also includes, but is not limited to, a person's gender. "Gender" means sex, and includes a person's gender identity and gender expression. "Gender



expression” means a person’s gender-related appearance and behavior whether or not stereotypically associated with the person’s assigned sex at birth.

(s) “Sexual orientation” means heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality.

(t) “Supervisor” means any individual having the authority, in the interest of the employer, to hire, transfer, suspend, lay off, recall, promote, discharge, assign, reward, or discipline other employees, or the responsibility to direct them, or to adjust their grievances, or effectively to recommend that action, if, in connection with the foregoing, the exercise of that authority is not of a merely routine or clerical nature, but requires the use of independent judgment.

(u) “Undue hardship” means an action requiring significant difficulty or expense, when considered in light of the following factors:

(1) The nature and cost of the accommodation needed.

(2) The overall financial resources of the facilities involved in the provision of the reasonable accommodations, the number of persons employed at the facility, and the effect on expenses and resources or the impact otherwise of these accommodations upon the operation of the facility.

(3) The overall financial resources of the covered entity, the overall size of the business of a covered entity with respect to the number of employees, and the number, type, and location of its facilities.

(4) The type of operations, including the composition, structure, and functions of the workforce of the entity.

(5) The geographic separateness or administrative or fiscal relationship of the facility or facilities.

(v) “National origin” discrimination includes, but is not limited to, discrimination on the basis of possessing a driver’s license or identification card granted under Section 12801.9 of the Vehicle Code.

(w) “Race” is inclusive of traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles.

(x) “Protective hairstyles” includes, but is not limited to, such hairstyles as braids, locks, and twists.



(y) “Reproductive health decisionmaking” includes, but is not limited to, a decision to use or access a particular drug, device, product, or medical service for reproductive health. This subdivision and other provisions in this part relating to “reproductive health decisionmaking” shall not be construed to mean that subdivision (r) of this section and other provisions in this part related to “sex” do not include reproductive health decisionmaking.

(z) **“Ancestry” means an individual’s perceived or actual birthplace, community, descent, family, heritage, parentage and social origin.** ~~“Caste” means an individual’s perceived position in a system of social stratification on the basis of inherited status. “A system of social stratification on the basis of inherited status” may be characterized by factors that may include, but are not limited to, inability or restricted ability to alter inherited status; socially enforced restrictions on marriage, private and public segregation, and discrimination; and social exclusion on the basis of perceived status.~~

SEC. 10. Section 12930 of the Government Code is amended to read:

12930. The department shall have the following functions, duties, and powers:

(a) To establish and maintain a principal office and any other offices within the state as are necessary to carry out the purposes of this part.

(b) To meet and function at any place within the state.

(c) To appoint attorneys, investigators, conciliators, mediators, and other employees as it may deem necessary, fix their compensation within the limitations provided by law, and prescribe their duties.

(d) To obtain upon request and utilize the services of all governmental departments and agencies and, in addition, with respect to housing discrimination, of conciliation councils.

(e) To adopt, promulgate, amend, and rescind suitable procedural rules and regulations to carry out the investigation, prosecution, and dispute resolution functions and duties of the department pursuant to this part.

(f) (1) To receive, investigate, conciliate, mediate, and prosecute complaints alleging practices made unlawful pursuant to Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 12940).



(2) To receive, investigate, conciliate, mediate, and prosecute complaints alleging a violation of Section 51, 51.5, 51.7, 51.9, 54, 54.1, or 54.2 of the Civil Code. The remedies and procedures of this part shall be independent of any other remedy or procedure that might apply.

(3) To receive, investigate, conciliate, mediate, and prosecute complaints alleging, and to bring civil actions pursuant to Section 52.5 of the Civil Code for, a violation of Section 236.1 of the Penal Code. Damages awarded in any action brought by the department pursuant to Section 52.5 of the Civil Code shall be awarded to the person harmed by the violation of Section 236.1 of the Penal Code. Costs and attorney's fees awarded in any action brought by the department pursuant to Section 52.5 of the Civil Code shall be awarded to the department. The remedies and procedures of this part shall be independent of any other remedy or procedure that might apply.

(4) To receive, investigate, conciliate, mediate, and prosecute complaints alleging practices made unlawful pursuant to Article 9.5 (commencing with Section 11135) of Chapter 1 of Part 1, except for complaints relating to educational equity brought under Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 200) of Part 1 of Division 1 of Title 1 of the Education Code and investigated pursuant to the procedures set forth in Subchapter 5.1 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, and not otherwise within the jurisdiction of the department.

(5) To receive, investigate, conciliate, mediate, and prosecute complaints alleging practices made unlawful pursuant to Section 1197.5 of the Labor Code. The department shall, in coordination with the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement within the Department of Industrial Relations, adopt procedures to ensure that the departments coordinate activities to enforce Section 1197.5 of the Labor Code.

(A) Nothing in this part prevents the director or the director's authorized representative, in that person's discretion, from making, signing, and filing a complaint pursuant to Section 12960 or 12961 alleging practices made unlawful under Section 11135.

(B) Remedies available to the department in conciliating, mediating, and prosecuting complaints alleging these practices are the same as those available to the department in conciliating, mediating, and prosecuting complaints alleging violations of Article 1 (commencing with Section 12940) of Chapter 6.



(g) In connection with any matter under investigation or in question before the department pursuant to a complaint filed under Section 12960, 12961, or 12980:

(1) To issue subpoenas to require the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of books, records, documents, and physical materials.

(2) To administer oaths, examine witnesses under oath and take evidence, and take depositions and affidavits.

(3) To issue written interrogatories.

(4) To request the production for inspection and copying of books, records, documents, and physical materials.

(5) To petition the superior courts to compel the appearance and testimony of witnesses, the production of books, records, documents, and physical materials, and the answering of interrogatories.

(h) To bring civil actions pursuant to Section 12965 or 12981 of this code, or Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-352; 42 U.S.C. Sec. 2000 et seq.), as amended, the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336; 42 U.S.C. 12101, et seq.), as amended, or the federal Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 3601 et seq.), and to prosecute those civil actions before state and federal trial courts.

(i) To issue those publications and those results of investigations and research as in its judgment will tend to promote goodwill and minimize or eliminate discrimination in employment on the bases enumerated in this part and discrimination in housing because of race, ~~caste~~, religious creed, color, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, disability, veteran or military status, genetic information, or sexual orientation.

(j) To investigate, approve, certify, decertify, monitor, and enforce nondiscrimination programs proposed by a contractor to be engaged in pursuant to Section 12990.

(k) To render annually to the Governor and to the Legislature a written report of its activities and of its recommendations.

(l) To conduct mediations at any time after a complaint is filed pursuant to Section 12960, 12961, or 12980. The department may end mediation at any time.



(m) The following shall apply with respect to any accusation pending before the former Fair Employment and Housing Commission on or after January 1, 2013:

(1) If an accusation issued under former Section 12965 includes a prayer either for damages for emotional injuries as a component of actual damages, or for administrative fines, or both, or if an accusation is amended for the purpose of adding a prayer either for damages for emotional injuries as a component of actual damages, or for administrative fines, or both, with the consent of the party accused of engaging in unlawful practices, the department may withdraw an accusation and bring a civil action in superior court.

(2) If an accusation was issued under former Section 12981, with the consent of the aggrieved party filing the complaint, an aggrieved person on whose behalf a complaint is filed, or the party accused of engaging in unlawful practices, the department may withdraw the accusation and bring a civil action in superior court.

(3) Where removal to court is not feasible, the department shall retain the services of the Office of Administrative Hearings to adjudicate the administrative action pursuant to Sections 11370.3 and 11502.

(n) On a challenge, pursuant to Section 1094.5 of the Code of Civil Procedure, to a decision of the former Fair Employment and Housing Commission pending on or after January 1, 2013, the director or the director's designee shall consult with the Attorney General regarding the defense of that writ petition.

(o) By performing the functions and duties and exercising the powers set forth in this part, the department represents the interests of the state and effectuates the declared public policy of the state to protect and safeguard the rights and opportunities of all persons from unlawful discrimination and other violations of this part. This subdivision is declarative of existing law as stated in Department of Fair Employment and Housing v. Cathy's Creations, Inc. (2020) 54 Cal.App.5th 404, 410.

SEC. 11. Section 12931 of the Government Code is amended to read:

12931. The department may also provide assistance to communities and persons therein in resolving disputes, disagreements, or difficulties relating to discriminatory practices based on race, ~~caste~~, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, veteran or military status, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression,



familial status, age, reproductive health decisionmaking, or sexual orientation that impair the rights of persons in those communities under the Constitution or laws of the United States or of this state. The services of the department may be made available in cases of these disputes, disagreements, or difficulties only when, in its judgment, peaceful relations among the persons of the community involved are threatened thereby. The department's services are to be made available only upon the request of an appropriate state or local public body, or upon the request of any person directly affected by the dispute, disagreement, or difficulty.

The assistance of the department pursuant to this section shall be limited to endeavors at investigation, conference, conciliation, and persuasion.

SEC. 12. Section 12940 of the Government Code is amended to read:

12940. It is an unlawful employment practice, unless based upon a bona fide occupational qualification, or, except where based upon applicable security regulations established by the United States or the State of California:

(a) For an employer, because of the race, ~~caste~~, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, reproductive health decisionmaking, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, or veteran or military status of any person, to refuse to hire or employ the person or to refuse to select the person for a training program leading to employment, or to bar or to discharge the person from employment or from a training program leading to employment, or to discriminate against the person in compensation or in terms, conditions, or privileges of employment.

(1) This part does not prohibit an employer from refusing to hire or discharging an employee with a physical or mental disability, or subject an employer to any legal liability resulting from the refusal to employ or the discharge of an employee with a physical or mental disability, if the employee, because of a physical or mental disability, is unable to perform the employee's essential duties even with reasonable accommodations, or cannot perform those duties in a manner that would not endanger the employee's health or safety or the health or safety of others even with reasonable accommodations.

(2) This part does not prohibit an employer from refusing to hire or discharging an employee who, because of the employee's medical condition, is unable to perform the employee's essential duties even with reasonable accommodations, or cannot



perform those duties in a manner that would not endanger the employee's health or safety or the health or safety of others even with reasonable accommodations. Nothing in this part shall subject an employer to any legal liability resulting from the refusal to employ or the discharge of an employee who, because of the employee's medical condition, is unable to perform the employee's essential duties, or cannot perform those duties in a manner that would not endanger the employee's health or safety or the health or safety of others even with reasonable accommodations.

(3) Nothing in this part relating to discrimination on account of marital status shall do either of the following:

(A) Affect the right of an employer to reasonably regulate, for reasons of supervision, safety, security, or morale, the working of spouses in the same department, division, or facility, consistent with the rules and regulations adopted by the council.

(B) Prohibit bona fide health plans from providing additional or greater benefits to employees with dependents than to those employees without or with fewer dependents.

(4) Nothing in this part relating to discrimination on account of sex shall affect the right of an employer to use veteran status as a factor in employee selection or to give special consideration to Vietnam-era veterans.

(5) (A) This part does not prohibit an employer from refusing to employ an individual because of the individual's age if the law compels or provides for that refusal. Promotions within the existing staff, hiring or promotion on the basis of experience and training, rehiring on the basis of seniority and prior service with the employer, or hiring under an established recruiting program from high schools, colleges, universities, or trade schools do not, in and of themselves, constitute unlawful employment practices.

(B) The provisions of this part relating to discrimination on the basis of age do not prohibit an employer from providing health benefits or health care reimbursement plans to retired persons that are altered, reduced, or eliminated when the person becomes eligible for Medicare health benefits. This subparagraph applies to all retiree health benefit plans and contractual provisions or practices concerning retiree health benefits and health care reimbursement plans in effect on or after January 1, 2011.



(b) For a labor organization, because of the race, ~~caste~~, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, reproductive health decisionmaking, or veteran or military status of any person, to exclude, expel, or restrict from its membership the person, or to provide only second-class or segregated membership or to discriminate against any person because of the race, ~~caste~~, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, reproductive health decisionmaking, or veteran or military status of the person in the election of officers of the labor organization or in the selection of the labor organization's staff or to discriminate in any way against any of its members or against any employer or against any person employed by an employer.

(c) For any person to discriminate against any person in the selection, termination, training, or other terms or treatment of that person in any apprenticeship training program, any other training program leading to employment, an unpaid internship, or another limited duration program to provide unpaid work experience for that person because of the race, ~~caste~~, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, reproductive health decisionmaking, or veteran or military status of the person discriminated against.

(d) For any employer or employment agency to print or circulate or cause to be printed or circulated any publication, or to make any non-job-related inquiry of an employee or applicant, either verbal or through use of an application form, that expresses, directly or indirectly, any limitation, specification, or discrimination as to race, ~~caste~~, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, reproductive health decisionmaking, or veteran or military status, or any intent to make any such limitation, specification, or discrimination. This part does not prohibit an employer or employment agency from inquiring into the age of an applicant, or from specifying age limitations, if the law compels or provides for that action.

(e) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) or (3), for any employer or employment agency to require any medical or psychological examination of an applicant, to make any medical or psychological inquiry of an applicant, to make any inquiry whether an applicant has a mental disability or physical disability or medical



condition, or to make any inquiry regarding the nature or severity of a physical disability, mental disability, or medical condition.

(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), an employer or employment agency may inquire into the ability of an applicant to perform job-related functions and may respond to an applicant's request for reasonable accommodation.

(3) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), an employer or employment agency may require a medical or psychological examination or make a medical or psychological inquiry of a job applicant after an employment offer has been made but prior to the commencement of employment duties, provided that the examination or inquiry is job related and consistent with business necessity and that all entering employees in the same job classification are subject to the same examination or inquiry.

(f) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), for any employer or employment agency to require any medical or psychological examination of an employee, to make any medical or psychological inquiry of an employee, to make any inquiry whether an employee has a mental disability, physical disability, or medical condition, or to make any inquiry regarding the nature or severity of a physical disability, mental disability, or medical condition.

(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), an employer or employment agency may require any examinations or inquiries that it can show to be job related and consistent with business necessity. An employer or employment agency may conduct voluntary medical examinations, including voluntary medical histories, which are part of an employee health program available to employees at that worksite.

(g) For any employer, labor organization, or employment agency to harass, discharge, expel, or otherwise discriminate against any person because the person has made a report pursuant to Section 11161.8 of the Penal Code that prohibits retaliation against hospital employees who report suspected patient abuse by health facilities or community care facilities.

(h) For any employer, labor organization, employment agency, or person to discharge, expel, or otherwise discriminate against any person because the person has opposed any practices forbidden under this part or because the person has filed a complaint, testified, or assisted in any proceeding under this part.

(i) For any person to aid, abet, incite, compel, or coerce the doing of any of the acts forbidden under this part, or to attempt to do so.



(j) (1) For an employer, labor organization, employment agency, apprenticeship training program or any training program leading to employment, or any other person, because of race, ~~caste~~, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, reproductive health decisionmaking, or veteran or military status, to harass an employee, an applicant, an unpaid intern or volunteer, or a person providing services pursuant to a contract. Harassment of an employee, an applicant, an unpaid intern or volunteer, or a person providing services pursuant to a contract by an employee, other than an agent or supervisor, shall be unlawful if the entity, or its agents or supervisors, knows or should have known of this conduct and fails to take immediate and appropriate corrective action. An employer may also be responsible for the acts of nonemployees, with respect to harassment of employees, applicants, unpaid interns or volunteers, or persons providing services pursuant to a contract in the workplace, if the employer, or its agents or supervisors, knows or should have known of the conduct and fails to take immediate and appropriate corrective action. In reviewing cases involving the acts of nonemployees, the extent of the employer's control and any other legal responsibility that the employer may have with respect to the conduct of those nonemployees shall be considered. An entity shall take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment from occurring. Loss of tangible job benefits shall not be necessary in order to establish harassment.

(2) The provisions of this subdivision are declaratory of existing law, except for the new duties imposed on employers with regard to harassment.

(3) An employee of an entity subject to this subdivision is personally liable for any harassment prohibited by this section that is perpetrated by the employee, regardless of whether the employer or covered entity knows or should have known of the conduct and fails to take immediate and appropriate corrective action.

(4) (A) For purposes of this subdivision only, "employer" means any person regularly employing one or more persons or regularly receiving the services of one or more persons providing services pursuant to a contract, or any person acting as an agent of an employer, directly or indirectly, the state, or any political or civil subdivision of the state, and cities. The definition of "employer" in subdivision (d) of Section 12926 applies to all provisions of this section other than this subdivision.

(B) Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), for purposes of this subdivision, "employer" does not include a religious association or corporation not organized for private profit, except as provided in Section 12926.2.



(C) For purposes of this subdivision, “harassment” because of sex includes sexual harassment, gender harassment, and harassment based on pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. Sexually harassing conduct need not be motivated by sexual desire.

(5) For purposes of this subdivision, “a person providing services pursuant to a contract” means a person who meets all of the following criteria:

(A) The person has the right to control the performance of the contract for services and discretion as to the manner of performance.

(B) The person is customarily engaged in an independently established business.

(C) The person has control over the time and place the work is performed, supplies the tools and instruments used in the work, and performs work that requires a particular skill not ordinarily used in the course of the employer’s work.

(k) For an employer, labor organization, employment agency, apprenticeship training program, or any training program leading to employment, to fail to take all reasonable steps necessary to prevent discrimination and harassment from occurring.

(l) (1) For an employer or other entity covered by this part to refuse to hire or employ a person or to refuse to select a person for a training program leading to employment or to bar or to discharge a person from employment or from a training program leading to employment, or to discriminate against a person in compensation or in terms, conditions, or privileges of employment because of a conflict between the person’s religious belief or observance and any employment requirement, unless the employer or other entity covered by this part demonstrates that it has explored any available reasonable alternative means of accommodating the religious belief or observance, including the possibilities of excusing the person from those duties that conflict with the person’s religious belief or observance or permitting those duties to be performed at another time or by another person, but is unable to reasonably accommodate the religious belief or observance without undue hardship, as defined in subdivision (u) of Section 12926, on the conduct of the business of the employer or other entity covered by this part. Religious belief or observance, as used in this section, includes, but is not limited to, observance of a Sabbath or other religious holy day or days, reasonable time necessary for travel prior and subsequent to a religious observance, and religious dress practice and religious grooming practice as described in subdivision (q) of Section 12926. This



subdivision shall also apply to an apprenticeship training program, an unpaid internship, and any other program to provide unpaid experience for a person in the workplace or industry.

(2) An accommodation of an individual's religious dress practice or religious grooming practice is not reasonable if the accommodation requires segregation of the individual from other employees or the public.

(3) An accommodation is not required under this subdivision if it would result in a violation of this part or any other law prohibiting discrimination or protecting civil rights, including subdivision (b) of Section 51 of the Civil Code and Section 11135 of this code.

(4) For an employer or other entity covered by this part to, in addition to the employee protections provided pursuant to subdivision (h), retaliate or otherwise discriminate against a person for requesting accommodation under this subdivision, regardless of whether the request was granted.

(m) (1) For an employer or other entity covered by this part to fail to make reasonable accommodation for the known physical or mental disability of an applicant or employee. Nothing in this subdivision or in paragraph (1) or (2) of subdivision (a) shall be construed to require an accommodation that is demonstrated by the employer or other covered entity to produce undue hardship, as defined in subdivision (u) of Section 12926, to its operation.

(2) For an employer or other entity covered by this part to, in addition to the employee protections provided pursuant to subdivision (h), retaliate or otherwise discriminate against a person for requesting accommodation under this subdivision, regardless of whether the request was granted.

(n) For an employer or other entity covered by this part to fail to engage in a timely, good faith, interactive process with the employee or applicant to determine effective reasonable accommodations, if any, in response to a request for reasonable accommodation by an employee or applicant with a known physical or mental disability or known medical condition.

(o) For an employer or other entity covered by this part, to subject, directly or indirectly, any employee, applicant, or other person to a test for the presence of a genetic characteristic.



(p) For an employer to require, as a condition of employment, continued employment, or a benefit of employment, the disclosure of information relating to an applicant's or employee's reproductive health decisionmaking.

(q) Nothing in this section shall be interpreted as preventing the ability of employers to identify members of the military or veterans for purposes of awarding a veteran's preference as permitted by law.

SEC. 13. Section 12944 of the Government Code is amended to read:

12944. (a) It shall be unlawful for a licensing board to require any examination or establish any other qualification for licensing that has an adverse impact on any class by virtue of its race, ~~caste~~, religious creed, color, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, medical condition, genetic information, physical disability, mental disability, reproductive health decisionmaking, or sexual orientation, unless the practice can be demonstrated to be job related.

Where the council, after hearing, determines that an examination is unlawful under this subdivision, the licensing board may continue to use and rely on the examination until such time as judicial review by the superior court of the determination is exhausted.

If an examination or other qualification for licensing is determined to be unlawful under this section, that determination shall not void, limit, repeal, or otherwise affect any right, privilege, status, or responsibility previously conferred upon any person by the examination or by a license issued in reliance on the examination or qualification.

(b) It shall be unlawful for a licensing board to fail or refuse to make reasonable accommodation to an individual's mental or physical disability or medical condition.

(c) It shall be unlawful for any licensing board, unless specifically acting in accordance with federal equal employment opportunity guidelines or regulations approved by the council, to print or circulate or cause to be printed or circulated any publication, or to make any non-job-related inquiry, either verbal or through use of an application form, which expresses, directly or indirectly, any limitation, specification, or discrimination as to race, ~~caste~~, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, reproductive



health decisionmaking, or sexual orientation or any intent to make any such limitation, specification, or discrimination. Nothing in this subdivision shall prohibit any licensing board from making, in connection with prospective licensure or certification, an inquiry as to, or a request for information regarding, the physical fitness of applicants if that inquiry or request for information is directly related and pertinent to the license or the licensed position the applicant is applying for. Nothing in this subdivision shall prohibit any licensing board, in connection with prospective examinations, licensure, or certification, from inviting individuals with physical or mental disabilities to request reasonable accommodations or from making inquiries related to reasonable accommodations.

(d) It is unlawful for a licensing board to discriminate against any person because the person has filed a complaint, testified, or assisted in any proceeding under this part.

(e) It is unlawful for any licensing board to fail to keep records of applications for licensing or certification for a period of two years following the date of receipt of the applications.

(f) As used in this section, "licensing board" means any state board, agency, or authority in the Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency that has the authority to grant licenses or certificates which are prerequisites to employment eligibility or professional status.

SEC. 14. Section 12955 of the Government Code is amended to read:

12955. It shall be unlawful:

(a) For the owner of any housing accommodation to discriminate against or harass any person because of the race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, source of income, disability, veteran or military status, or genetic information of that person.

(b) For the owner of any housing accommodation to make or to cause to be made any written or oral inquiry concerning the race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, disability, veteran or military status, or genetic information of any person seeking to purchase, rent, or lease any housing accommodation.



(c) For any person to make, print, or publish, or cause to be made, printed, or published any notice, statement, or advertisement, with respect to the sale or rental of a housing accommodation that indicates any preference, limitation, or discrimination based on race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, source of income, disability, veteran or military status, or genetic information or an intention to make that preference, limitation, or discrimination.

(d) For any person subject to the provisions of Section 51 of the Civil Code, as that section applies to housing accommodations, to discriminate against any person on the basis of sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, color, race, ~~caste~~, religion, ancestry, national origin, familial status, marital status, disability, genetic information, source of income, veteran or military status, or on any other basis prohibited by that section. Selection preferences based on age, imposed in connection with a federally approved housing program, do not constitute age discrimination in housing.

(e) For any person, bank, mortgage company, or other financial institution that provides financial assistance for the purchase, refinance, organization, or construction of any housing accommodation to discriminate against any person or group of persons because of the race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, source of income, disability, veteran or military status, or genetic information in the terms, conditions, or privileges relating to the obtaining or use of that financial assistance.

(f) For any owner of housing accommodations to harass, evict, or otherwise discriminate against any person in the sale or rental of housing accommodations when the owner's dominant purpose is retaliation against a person who has opposed practices unlawful under this section, informed law enforcement agencies of practices believed unlawful under this section, has testified or assisted in any proceeding under this part, or has aided or encouraged a person to exercise or enjoy the rights secured by this part. Nothing herein is intended to cause or permit the delay of an unlawful detainer action.

(g) For any person to aid, abet, incite, compel, or coerce the doing of any of the acts or practices declared unlawful in this section, or to attempt to do so.

(h) For any person, for profit, to induce any person to sell or rent any dwelling by representations regarding the entry or prospective entry into the neighborhood of a



person or persons of a particular race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, ancestry, disability, genetic information, source of income, familial status, veteran or military status, or national origin.

(i) (1) For any person or other organization or entity whose business involves real estate-related transactions to discriminate against any person in making available a transaction, or in the terms and conditions of a transaction, because of race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, source of income, familial status, disability, veteran or military status, or genetic information.

(2) For any person or other entity whose business includes performing appraisals, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 11302 of the Business and Professions Code, of residential real property to discriminate against any person in making available those services, or in the performance of those services, because of race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, familial status, source of income, disability, genetic information, veteran or military status, or national origin.

(j) To deny a person access to, or membership or participation in, a multiple listing service, real estate brokerage organization, or other service because of race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, ancestry, disability, genetic information, familial status, source of income, veteran or military status, or national origin.

(k) To otherwise make unavailable or deny a dwelling based on discrimination because of race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, familial status, source of income, disability, genetic information, veteran or military status, or national origin.

(l) To discriminate through public or private land use practices, decisions, and authorizations because of race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, familial status, marital status, disability, genetic information, national origin, source of income, veteran or military status, or ancestry. Discrimination includes, but is not limited to, restrictive covenants, zoning laws, denials of use permits, and other actions authorized under the Planning and Zoning Law (Title 7 (commencing with Section 65000)), that make housing opportunities unavailable.



Discrimination under this subdivision also includes the existence of a restrictive covenant, regardless of whether accompanied by a statement that the restrictive covenant is repealed or void.

(m) As used in this section, “race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, source of income, disability, veteran or military status, or genetic information,” includes a perception that the person has any of those characteristics or that the person is associated with a person who has, or is perceived to have, any of those characteristics.

(n) To use a financial or income standard in the rental of housing that fails to account for the aggregate income of persons residing together or proposing to reside together on the same basis as the aggregate income of married persons residing together or proposing to reside together.

(o) In instances where there is a government rent subsidy, to use a financial or income standard in assessing eligibility for the rental of housing that is not based on the portion of the rent to be paid by the tenant.

(p) (1) For the purposes of this section, “source of income” means lawful, verifiable income paid directly to a tenant, or to a representative of a tenant, or paid to a housing owner or landlord on behalf of a tenant, including federal, state, or local public assistance, and federal, state, or local housing subsidies, including, but not limited to, federal housing assistance vouchers issued under Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. Sec. 1437f). “Source of income” includes a federal Department of Housing and Urban Development Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing voucher. For the purposes of this section, a housing owner or landlord is not considered a representative of a tenant unless the source of income is a federal Department of Housing and Urban Development Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing voucher.

(2) For the purposes of this section, it shall not constitute discrimination based on source of income to make a written or oral inquiry concerning the level or source of income.

SEC. 15. Section 12955.8 of the Government Code is amended to read:

12955.8. For purposes of this article, in connection with unlawful practices:



(a) Proof of an intentional violation of this article includes, but is not limited to, an act or failure to act that is otherwise covered by this part, that demonstrates an intent to discriminate in any manner in violation of this part. A person intends to discriminate if race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, source of income, disability, veteran or military status, or genetic information is a motivating factor in committing a discriminatory housing practice even though other factors may have also motivated the practice. An intent to discriminate may be established by direct or circumstantial evidence.

(b) Proof of a violation causing a discriminatory effect is shown if an act or failure to act that is otherwise covered by this part, and that has the effect, regardless of intent, of unlawfully discriminating on the basis of race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, source of income, disability, veteran or military status, or genetic information. A business establishment whose action or inaction has an unintended discriminatory effect shall not be considered to have committed an unlawful housing practice in violation of this part if the business establishment can establish that the action or inaction is necessary to the operation of the business and effectively carries out the significant business need it is alleged to serve. In cases that do not involve a business establishment, the person whose action or inaction has an unintended discriminatory effect shall not be considered to have committed an unlawful housing practice in violation of this part if the person can establish that the action or inaction is necessary to achieve an important purpose sufficiently compelling to override the discriminatory effect and effectively carries out the purpose it is alleged to serve.

(1) Any determination of a violation pursuant to this subdivision shall consider whether or not there are feasible alternatives that would equally well or better accomplish the purpose advanced with a less discriminatory effect.

(2) For purposes of this subdivision, the term "business establishment" shall have the same meaning as in Section 51 of the Civil Code.

SEC. 16. Section 12956.1 of the Government Code is amended to read:

12956.1. (a) As used in this section:



(1) “Association,” “governing documents,” and “declaration” have the same meanings as set forth in Sections 4080, 4135, and 4150 or Sections 6528, 6546, and 6552 of the Civil Code.

(2) “Redaction” means the process of rerecording of a document that originally contained unlawful restrictive language, and when presented to the county recorder for rerecording, no longer contains the unlawful language or the unlawful language is masked so that it is not readable or visible.

(3) “Redacted” means the result of the rerecording of a document that originally contained unlawful restrictive language, and when presented to the county recorder for rerecording, no longer contains the unlawful language or the unlawful language is masked so that it is not readable or visible.

(b) (1) A county recorder, title company, escrow company, real estate broker, real estate agent, or association that provides a copy of a declaration, governing document, or deed to any person shall place a cover page or stamp on the first page of the previously recorded document or documents stating, in at least 14-point boldface type, the following:

“If this document contains any restriction based on age, race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, familial status, marital status, disability, veteran or military status, genetic information, national origin, source of income as defined in subdivision (p) of Section 12955, or ancestry, that restriction violates state and federal fair housing laws and is void, and may be removed pursuant to Section 12956.2 of the Government Code by submitting a “Restrictive Covenant Modification” form, together with a copy of the attached document with the unlawful provision redacted to the county recorder’s office. The “Restrictive Covenant Modification” form can be obtained from the county recorder’s office and may be available on its internet website. The form may also be available from the party that provided you with this document. Lawful restrictions under state and federal law on the age of occupants in senior housing or housing for older persons shall not be construed as restrictions based on familial status.”

(2) The requirements of paragraph (1) shall not apply to documents being submitted for recordation to a county recorder.



(3) A title company, escrow company, or association that delivers a copy of a declaration, governing document, or deed directly to a person who holds an ownership interest of record in property shall also provide a Restrictive Covenant Modification form with procedural information for appropriate processing along with the document.

(c) Any person who records a document for the express purpose of adding a racially restrictive covenant is guilty of a misdemeanor. The county recorder shall not incur any liability for recording the document. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a prosecution for a violation of this subdivision shall commence within three years after the discovery of the recording of the document.

SEC. 17. Section 12956.2 of the Government Code is amended to read:

12956.2. (a) (1) A person who holds or is acquiring an ownership interest of record in property that the person believes is the subject of an unlawfully restrictive covenant in violation of subdivision (l) of Section 12955 may record a document titled Restrictive Covenant Modification. A title company, escrow company, county recorder, real estate broker, real estate agent, or other person also may record the modification document provided for in this section. The county recorder may waive the fee prescribed for recording and indexing instruments pursuant to Section 27361 in the case of a Restrictive Covenant Modification document. The modification document shall include a complete copy of the original document containing the unlawfully restrictive language with the unlawfully restrictive covenant language redacted.

(2) Beginning July 1, 2022, if a title company, escrow company, real estate broker, or real estate agent has actual knowledge that a declaration, governing document, or deed that is being directly delivered to a person who holds or is acquiring an ownership interest in property includes a possible unlawfully restrictive covenant, they shall notify the person who holds or is acquiring the ownership interest in the property of the existence of that covenant and their ability to have it removed through the restrictive covenant modification process. There shall be no presumption that a party providing a document has read the document or has actual knowledge of its content.

(3) Beginning July 1, 2022, if requested before the close of escrow, the title company or escrow company directly involved in the pending transaction shall assist in the preparation of a Restrictive Covenant Modification pursuant to this section, but the title company or escrow company shall have no liability associated



with the recordation of a Restrictive Covenant Modification that contains modifications not authorized by this section on behalf of the requester.

(b) (1) Before recording the Restrictive Covenant Modification document, the county recorder shall submit the modification document and the original document to the county counsel who shall determine whether the language in the original document contains an unlawful restriction based on age, race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, familial status, marital status, disability, genetic information, veteran or military status, national origin, source of income as defined in subdivision (p) of Section 12955, or ancestry. The county counsel shall return the documents and inform the county recorder of its determination within a period of time specified in paragraph (2). The county recorder shall refuse to record the modification document if the county counsel or their designee finds that the original document does not contain an unlawful restriction as specified in this subdivision or the modification document contains modifications not authorized by this section.

(2) For documents recorded pursuant to subdivision (a), the period of time shall be a reasonable period of time, not to exceed three months, from the date the request for recordation is made, unless extraordinary circumstances apply.

(c) If a person requests to record a modification document, that person shall provide a return address in order for the county recorder to notify this person of the action taken by the county counsel on the respective property. The notice required pursuant to this subdivision may be made on a postcard mailed by first-class mail.

(d) The modification document shall be indexed in the same manner as the original document being modified. It shall contain a recording reference to the original document in the form of a book and page or instrument number, and date of the recording.

(e) Subject to covenants, conditions, and restrictions that were recorded after the recording of the original document that contains the unlawfully restrictive language and subject to covenants, conditions, and restrictions that will be recorded after the Restrictive Covenant Modification, the restrictions in the Restrictive Covenant Modification, once recorded, are the only restrictions having effect on the property. The effective date of the terms and conditions of the modification document shall be the same as the effective date of the original document.



(f) A Restrictive Covenant Modification form shall be prepared and accepted for submission and recordation in all counties in substantially the following form:

RESTRICTIVE COVENANT MODIFICATION:

The following referenced document contains a restriction based on age, race, ~~caste~~, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, familial status, marital status, disability, veteran or military status, genetic information, national origin, source of income as defined in subdivision (p) of Section 12955 of the Government Code, or ancestry, that violates state and federal fair housing laws and is void. Pursuant to Section 12956.2 of the Government Code, this document is being recorded solely for the purpose of redacting and eliminating that restrictive covenant as shown on page(s) ____ of the document recorded on _____(date) in book _____ and page _____ or instrument number _____ of the official records of the County of _____, State of California.

Attached hereto is a true, correct and complete copy of the document referenced above, with the unlawful restrictive covenant redacted.

This modification document shall be indexed in the same manner as the original document being modified, pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 12956.2 of the Government Code.

The effective date of the terms and conditions of the modification document shall be the same as the effective date of the original document.

(Signature of submitting party)

_____ County Counsel, or their designee, pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 12956.2 of the Government Code, hereby states that it has determined that the original document referenced above contains an unlawful restriction and this modification may be recorded.

Or

_____ County Counsel, or their designee, pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 12956.2 of the Government Code, finds that the original document does not contain an unlawful restriction, or the modification document contains modifications not authorized, and this modification may not be recorded.



County Counsel

By:

Date:

(g) The county recorder shall make available to the public Restrictive Covenant Modification forms onsite in an appropriately designated area, or online on the county recorder's internet website, either of which shall be deemed to satisfy the requirement of paragraphs (1) and (2) of subdivision (b) of Section 12956.1 to provide a Restrictive Covenant Modification form if the procedural information for appropriate processing is attached to the form. Those forms shall permit multiple submissions on behalf of different homes and for processing homes in batches with respect to a modification document that affects multiple homes or lots. The forms shall also permit the submission of a Restrictive Covenant Modification form for a homeowners' association or a common interest development to modify covenants, conditions, and restrictions that will correct unlawfully restrictive covenants for multiple dwellings within a subdivision.

(h) If a person causes to be recorded a modified document pursuant to this section that contains modifications not authorized by this section, the county recorder shall not incur liability for recording the document. The liability that may result from the unauthorized recordation is the sole responsibility of the person who caused the modified recordation as provided in subdivision (a).

(i) (1) A Restrictive Covenant Modification that is approved by county counsel or their designee and recorded pursuant to this section removes the illegal covenant from all property affected by the original covenant regardless of who submits the modification.

(2) This section does not affect the obligations of the governing board of a common interest development as defined in Section 4100 or 6534 of the Civil Code if the board of directors of that common interest development is subject to the requirements of subdivision (b) of Section 4225 or of subdivision (b) of Section 6606 of the Civil Code.

(j) For purposes of this section, "redaction" and "redacted" mean the same as defined in Section 12956.1.

SEC. 18. Section 12993 of the Government Code is amended to read:



12993. (a) The provisions of this part shall be construed liberally for the accomplishment of the purposes of this part. This part does not repeal any of the provisions of civil rights law or of any other law of this state relating to discrimination because of race, ~~caste~~, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, age, reproductive health decisionmaking, or sexual orientation, unless those provisions provide less protection to the enumerated classes of persons covered under this part.

(b) The provisions in this part relating to discrimination in employment on account of sex or medical condition do not affect the operation of the terms or conditions of any bona fide retirement, pension, employee benefit, or insurance plan, provided the terms or conditions are in accordance with customary and reasonable or actuarially sound underwriting practices.

(c) While it is the intention of the Legislature to occupy the field of regulation of discrimination in employment and housing encompassed by the provisions of this part, exclusive of all other laws banning discrimination in employment and housing by any city, city and county, county, or other political subdivision of the state, this part does not limit or restrict the application of Section 51 of the Civil Code.