

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2488

Introduced by Assembly Member Schiavo

February 20, 2026

An act to add Section 6330.1 to the Labor Code, relating to employment.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2488, as introduced, Schiavo. Department of Industrial Relations: occupational safety and health.

Existing law establishes the Division of Occupational Safety and Health in the Department of Industrial Relations, and charges the division with the enforcement of various laws affecting safe working conditions, including the California Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1973. Existing law requires the Director of Industrial Relations to prepare and submit to the Legislature an annual report on the activities of the division, as specified.

Existing law establishes the University of California, under the administration of the Regents of the University of California, as one of the segments of postsecondary education in the state. Existing law requires the department to contract with the University of California, Los Angeles Labor Center, to conduct a study evaluating opportunities to improve worker safety and safeguard employment rights, as specified.

This bill would require the department, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to contract with the University of California, Berkeley Labor Occupational Health Program and the University of California, Los Angeles Labor Occupational Safety and Health Program to conduct a study to evaluate the understaffing and vacancies within the division and make recommendations to the department, the Department of

Human Resources, and the Legislature on policies the state shall use to inform the consideration and establishment of career pathways to the Compliance Safety and Health Officer classification. The bill would authorize the University of California, as defined, to subcontract the responsibility for conducting the study to other specified entities. The bill would require the department to cooperate and collaborate with the University of California and its subcontractors, if any, in the conduct of the study. The bill would require the University of California and its subcontractors, if any, as part of the study, to hold at least one well-publicized and conveniently located meeting to provide an opportunity for comment by stakeholders and the public on the issues addressed in the study. The bill would require the University of California and its subcontractors, if any, to issue a report that includes certain information about the understaffing and vacancies of Compliance Safety and Health Officers within the division. The bill would require the report to be completed in 18 months, posted on the division’s internet website, and forwarded to the Governor and the chairs of specified legislative committees. The bill would define terms for these purposes.

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

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

- 1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the
 2 following:
- 3 (1) The Division of Occupational Safety and Health has had an
 4 ongoing, multiyear understaffing and vacancy crisis, particularly
 5 in their enforcement division.
- 6 (2) The Division of Occupational Safety and Health reported
 7 in November 2024 that their ratio of Compliance Safety and Health
 8 Officers to workers is 1 inspector to every 120,102 workers in the
 9 State of California. This compares to ratios of 1 to 26,000 in the
 10 state of Washington, and 1 to 24,000 in the state of Oregon.
- 11 (3) As of November 2024, the enforcement division for the
 12 Division of Occupational Safety and Health has a 42.5 percent
 13 vacancy rate, with eight regional enforcement offices reporting
 14 vacancy rates above 50 percent.
- 15 (4) The ratio of inspectors to workers and the high vacancy rate
 16 in the Division of Occupational Safety and Health

1 disproportionately impact certain industries, sectors, and
2 geographic regions of the state.

3 (5) As of November 2024, only 10 Compliance Safety and
4 Health Officers statewide are certified bilingual, while 5 million
5 of the state's 19 million workers speak languages other than
6 English and one in three employed workers are immigrants.

7 (6) This gap in language access creates communication barriers
8 that reduce the ability of workers with limited English proficiency
9 to report health and safety violations.

10 (7) Amidst this chronic vacancy issue, the Division of
11 Occupational Safety and Health opened 12 percent fewer
12 inspections and issued 12 percent fewer citations during the first
13 three quarters of 2024 than during the same period in 2023. The
14 cited violations for this period in 2024 were 50 percent lower than
15 in 2022.

16 (8) The health and safety of California workers depends on a
17 fully staffed Division of Occupational Safety and Health. California
18 must enact new and urgent strategies to address the ongoing
19 staffing vacancies with the goal of increasing and diversifying the
20 pool of candidates for enforcement positions that can serve
21 California's diverse workforce.

22 (b) Therefore, it is the intent of the Legislature to develop
23 recommendations for the design of a Division of Occupational
24 Safety and Health Compliance Safety and Health Officer workforce
25 development pipeline program, and any relevant policy
26 improvements to aid in the effective implementation of that
27 program, in order to expand and diversify the candidates who may
28 fill these positions and therefore improve health and safety
29 enforcement outcomes in the state of California. This effort is
30 intended as part of a multipronged strategy that should complement,
31 and in no way delay, current and ongoing efforts to address staffing
32 issues of the Division of Occupational Safety and Health.

33 SEC. 2. Section 6330.1 is added to the Labor Code, to read:

34 6330.1. (a) (1) The department shall contract with the
35 University of California, Berkeley Labor Occupational Health
36 Program and the University of California, Los Angeles Labor
37 Occupational Safety and Health Program, within 120 days of an
38 appropriation by the Legislature, to conduct a study to evaluate
39 the understaffing and vacancies within the division and make
40 recommendations to the department, the Department of Human

1 Resources, and the Legislature on policies the state shall use to
2 inform the consideration and establishment of career pathways to
3 the Compliance Safety and Health Officer classification.

4 (2) The University of California may subcontract, in whole or
5 in part, the responsibility for conducting the study to another
6 academic institution.

7 (b) (1) The entity or entities with which a contract or
8 subcontract is entered into pursuant to subdivision (a) shall conduct
9 the study in the manner described in this section.

10 (2) The University of California and its subcontractors, if any,
11 shall issue a report that includes, but is not limited to, all of the
12 following:

13 (A) Literature review compiling existing research related to the
14 division's understaffing and vacancy problem, impacts of these
15 problems at statewide, regional, or industry levels, and models for
16 workforce development programs that could increase the career
17 pathways for Compliance Safety and Health Officers.

18 (B) An analysis to identify primary causes of the division's
19 Compliance Safety and Health Officer vacancies.

20 (C) Recommendations to address the division's Compliance
21 Safety and Health Officer understaffing and vacancies, including
22 recommended timeline and strategies to implement a workforce
23 training program. In making these recommendations, the study
24 shall consider all of the following:

25 (i) How to improve the effectiveness of hiring and retention and
26 decrease the hiring time for the division's Compliance Safety and
27 Health Officer positions.

28 (ii) A summary of all relevant division Compliance Safety and
29 Health Officer position responsibilities, skills, and tasks, as
30 provided by the division or through interviews with certified safety
31 and health officials.

32 (iii) An analysis of different workforce development and training
33 models including third-party certification and apprenticeship.

34 (iv) Identification of current programs, institutions, or
35 organizations in the field that could partner in a new workforce
36 development training program and what role they could play.

37 (v) An analysis of external workforce populations who may
38 have matching skill sets and experience that would make them
39 effective candidates for a Compliance Safety and Health Officer
40 workforce training program, including linguistic and cultural

1 competencies that match the diverse California workforce. This
2 may include an analysis of the level of fit between these candidates
3 and current minimum qualifications.

4 (vi) Recommendations on Compliance Safety and Health Officer
5 qualities and skills that would encourage worker engagement with
6 the division based on data collected from low-wage and immigrant
7 workers.

8 (vii) Identification of core curriculum components for the
9 eventual development of a workforce training program for
10 Compliance Safety and Health Officers.

11 (3) The department shall cooperate and collaborate with the
12 University of California and its subcontractors, if any, in the
13 conduct of the study.

14 (4) As part of the study, the University of California and its
15 subcontractors, if any, shall hold at least one well-publicized and
16 conveniently located meeting to provide an opportunity for
17 comment by stakeholders and the public on the issues addressed
18 in the study.

19 (5) Eighteen months after entering into the contract with the
20 University of California pursuant to subdivision (a), the report
21 shall be completed and the department shall post the completed
22 report on the division's internet website and forward the completed
23 report to the Governor and the Chairs of the Assembly Committee
24 on Labor and Employment and the Senate Committee on Labor,
25 Public Employment and Retirement.

26 (6) The report shall be submitted in compliance with Section
27 9795 of the Government Code.

28 (c) Implementation of this section shall be subject to an
29 appropriation made by the Legislature for the express purpose of
30 this section.

31 (d) As used in this section:

32 (1) "Academic institution" means a public college or university
33 accredited by a commission recognized by the United States
34 Department of Education.

35 (2) "Compliance Safety and Health Officers" means personnel
36 in the safety engineer and industrial hygienist classifications of
37 the Division of Occupational Safety and Health.

38 (3) "Department" means the Department of Industrial Relations.

39 (4) "Division" means the Division of Occupational Safety and
40 Health.

1 (5) “The University of California” means the University of
2 California, Berkeley Labor Occupational Health Program and the
3 University of California, Los Angeles Labor Occupational Safety
4 and Health Program.

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