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## SB-388 California Latino Commission. (2025-2026)

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CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

### SENATE BILL

**NO. 388**

**Introduced by Senators Padilla, Cervantes, Hurtado, and Rubio**

**(Principal coauthor: Senator Gonzalez)**

**(Principal coauthors: Assembly Members Carrillo and Ortega)**

**(Coauthors: Senators Arreguín and Menjivar)**

**(Coauthors: Assembly Members Calderon, Mark González, Quirk-Silva, Celeste Rodriguez, Solache, and Zbur)**

**February 14, 2025**

An act to add and repeal Chapter 3.4.1 (commencing with Section 8277) of Division 1 of Title 2 of the Government Code, relating to state government.

### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 388, Padilla. California Latino Commission.

Existing law establishes various advisory boards and commissions in state government with specified duties and responsibilities.

This bill would create the California Latino Commission to address the inequities faced by the Latino community in housing, education, economic mobility, labor, and health care. The commission would consist of 9 members who have demonstrated expertise in specified areas, including housing policy and advocacy and economic development. The bill would task the commission with, among other things, collecting and analyzing data, developing recommendations, and monitoring the implementation of state programs and policies affecting the Latino community, as specified. The bill would require the commission to work with other state agencies and to submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature. The bill would establish that the commission and its activities would be supported by appropriations by the Legislature from the General Fund and grants from federal and private sources. The bill would repeal these provisions on January 1, 2036.

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

**SECTION 1.** Chapter 3.4.1 (commencing with Section 8277) is added to Division 1 of Title 2 of the Government Code, to read:

### **CHAPTER 3.4.1. California Latino Commission**

**8277.** The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

- (a) California's Latino population is a key driver of the state's economy, but it faces significant challenges, particularly in housing, education, labor, and health care.
- (b) The state's housing crisis disproportionately impacts Latinos, with the group facing higher rates of overcrowding, evictions, and homelessness. This crisis exacerbates existing inequalities and undermines the quality of life for many Latinos.
- (c) Latinos are underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, which are critical to California's economy and the high-paying jobs it provides. Despite an increasing number of Latinos attending institutions of higher education, barriers to obtaining STEM degrees persist.
- (d) Latino students entering California community colleges are more likely to be placed in remedial courses, delaying their academic progress and diminishing their chances for upward mobility.
- (e) Latinos are more likely to be engaged in precarious, low-wage gig work that often lacks the protections and benefits of traditional employment, while being underrepresented in organized labor unions.
- (f) Nearly 60 percent of Latino children in California are covered by Medi-Cal, reflecting the persistent poverty among this group despite California being the wealthiest state in the nation.
- (g) There is a critical need for a coordinated, comprehensive approach to address these systemic disparities and to create policies that ensure Latinos have equal opportunities to thrive in housing, education, the workforce, and health care.

**8277.1.** (a) The California Latino Commission is hereby established in state government to address the inequities faced by the Latino community in housing, education, economic mobility, labor, and health care.

(b) The commission shall consist of three members appointed by the Governor, three members appointed by the President pro Tempore of the Senate, and three members appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly who shall all have demonstrated expertise in any of the following areas:

- (1) Housing policy and advocacy.
- (2) Education, particularly in community colleges or STEM fields.
- (3) Labor rights and union representation.
- (4) Public health and health equity, with a focus on Medi-Cal and poverty.
- (5) Economic development and workforce opportunities for Latinos.
- (6) Environment and climate change.
- (7) Small business and entrepreneurship.
- (8) K–12 students.
- (9) Any other area deemed appropriate by the commission.

(c) Commission members shall serve two-year terms and shall meet at least quarterly to review data, develop strategies, and ensure that state policies are effectively addressing the needs of the Latino community.

**8277.2.** (a) The commission shall have the following powers and duties:

- (1) Collecting and analyzing data regarding the disparities faced by Latinos in housing, education, employment, and health care, and assessing the effectiveness of existing state programs and policies in addressing those disparities.

(2) Developing recommendations to address the housing crisis affecting Latinos with particular focus on affordable housing, eviction prevention, rent control, and policies to reduce homelessness.

(3) Developing initiatives to increase Latino enrollment and graduation rates in STEM fields in California's public universities, private universities, and community colleges, including mentorship, financial aid, and support services tailored to the needs of Latino students.

(4) Promoting policies that increase Latino participation in high-wage, high-tech industries, including the development of apprenticeship programs targeting Latino communities.

(5) Investigating the low participation of Latinos in organized labor and proposing strategies to increase union representation, collective bargaining rights, and workplace protections for Latinos.

(6) Working with health agencies to ensure equitable access to health services for Latinos, particularly through Medi-Cal, and developing long-term strategies for reducing poverty and improving the economic mobility of Latino families.

(7) Monitoring the implementation of state programs and policies affecting the Latino community, tracking progress over time, and reporting findings annually to the Governor and the Legislature.

(b) The commission shall host annual public forums, listening sessions, and town hall meetings across California, particularly in areas with significant Latino populations, to ensure that community members have a direct role in shaping the commission's agenda and priorities.

**8277.3.** (a) The commission shall collaborate with the following state agencies in order to achieve its objectives:

(1) The Department of Housing and Community Development.

(2) The University of California, the California State University, and the California Community Colleges.

(3) The Labor and Workforce Development Agency.

(4) The State Department of Public Health.

(5) The State Department of Education.

(6) Other state agencies, as needed.

(b) Each state agency shall provide appropriate and reasonable assistance to the commission, as needed, in order that it may carry out the purposes of this chapter.

**8277.4.** The commission and its activities shall be supported by appropriations by the Legislature from the General Fund and grants from federal and private sources.

**8277.5.** (a) Notwithstanding Section 10231.5, the commission shall submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature detailing its work, recounting the resources it needs, and recommending policies for the following year.

(b) A report to be submitted pursuant to subdivision (a) shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795.

**8277.6.** This chapter shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2036, and as of that date is repealed.