Date of Hearing: March 17, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Mike Fong, Chair
AB 1831 (Ahrens) – As Introduced February 11, 2026

SUBJECT: California State University: employees and contractors: compensation restrictions

SUMMARY: Institutes a salary cap for any employee of the California State University, who is not represented by an employee organization and institutes circumstances in which the California State University would be prohibited from increasing the salaries of employees who are not represented by an employee organization. Specifically, **this bill**:

1) Prohibits the California State University (CSU) Board of Trustees (BOT) from authorizing or adjusting the compensation of an administrator, manager, contract, or other employee who is not represented by an employee organization, as defined, to a figure that exceeds 125 percent of the annual compensation recommended to be paid to the Governor of California by the California Citizens Compensation Commission.

2) Prohibits the CSU BOT from increasing the salaries of administrators, managers, contracted employees, or other employees who are not represented by an employee organization in a fiscal year where the BOT has authorized an increase in student tuition.

3) Requires the CSU BOT, by July 1, 2027, to repeal the resolution approving compensation described in Attachment A of Item 11 of the Committee on the University and Faculty Personnel at the November 2025 meeting of the BOT.

EXISTING LAW:

1) Establishes the CSU system, comprised of 23 campuses, and bestows upon the CSU Trustees, through the BOT, the power, duties, and functions with respect to the management, administration, and control of the CSU system (Education Code (EDC) Sections 66606 and 89000, et. seq.).

2) Authorizes the CSU BOT, beginning on July 1, 1961, to fill academic and administrative positions at the CSU. Authorizes the CSU BOT to create and adjust the salaries and classifications of academic, nonacademic, and administrative positions and endows the CSU BOT with the sole authority to fill the positions by appointment without the need for additional approval by a state officer or agency for the salaries nor the classifications. The CSU BOT, when determining the initial salaries or when adjusting salaries for all positions, will consider whether the salary is a competitive offer to recruitment and retainment of qualified candidates when compared to other educational institutions, private industries, or public jurisdictions that are employing personnel with similar duties and responsibilities. Clarifies the creation and adjustment of nonacademic employees' salaries will be in accordance with Government Code Section 19826 and the BOT will not make adjustments that require expenditures in excess of existing funding for the payment of salaries. Clarifies the Education Code sections pertaining to the appeals for dismissals, demotions, and suspension will be applicable to academic employees (EDC Section 66609, subdivision (c)).

3) Any action taken by the BOT on a proposal to increase the compensation of the following individuals will occur in an open session:

   a) The Chancellor of the CSU;

   b) A Vice Chancellor;

   c) The treasurer;

   d) The President of an individual campus;

   e) The general counsel; and,

   f) The trustees' secretary.

   Any discussion or action taken on an executive compensation program or policy will be done in an open session. Compensation for the principal officers of the Trustees and the officers of the university will include salary, benefits, severance payments, retirement benefits, and any other form of compensation (EDC Section 66602.7).

4) Every nonacademic employee of the CSU will be appointed for a probationary year. At the end of the probationary year, if the employee is reappointed, the employee will have the same salary or will be given a salary increase (EDC Section 89531 (a)).

5) Authorizes the California Department of Human Resources (CDH) to create and adjust salaries for state employees who are not represented by an employee organization for each position in state civil service that is subject to merit limits. The salary range as created by CDH, will be based on similar salaries of those with comparable duties and responsibilities. Consideration will be given to ensure the salary ranges are comparable to the same duties and responsibilities of those employed by other public entities and private businesses. Limits the salary increases to the amount of funding received by CDH for salary increase and prohibits CDH from increasing the salaries of those employees who are represented by an employee organization (Government Code Section 19826 subdivision (a) and (b)).

4) Prohibits CDH from increasing the salaries of the below state employees to a figure that exceeds 125 percent of the annual compensation recommended to be paid to the Governor of California by the California Citizens Compensation Commission. The employees this salary cap applies to are as follows: Director of Finance, Secretary of Transportation, Secretary of Natural Resources Agency, Secretary of California Health and Services, Secretary of Business, Consumer Services, and Housing, Commission of the California Highway Patrol, Secretary of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Secretary of Food and Agriculture, Secretary of Veteran Affairs, Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development, Secretary for Environmental Protection, Secretary of Government Operations, Commissioner of Financial Protection and Innovation, Director of Transportation, Real Estate Commissioner, Director of Social Services, Director of Water Resources, Director of General Services, Director of Motor Vehicles, Executive Officer of the Franchise Tax Board, Director of Employment Development, Director of Alcoholic Beverage Control, Director of Housing and Community Development, Director of Alcohol and Drug Programs, Director of Statewide Health Planning and Development, Director of the Department of Human Resources, Director of Health Care Services, Director of State Hospitals, Director of

Developmental Services, State Public Defender, Director of the California State Lottery, Director of Fish and Wildlife, Director of Parks and Recreation, Director of Rehabilitation, Director of the Office of Administrative Law, Director of Consumer Affairs, Director of Forestry and Fire Protection, The Inspector General pursuant to Section 6125 of the Penal Code, Director of Child Support Services, Director of Industrial Relations, Director of Toxic Substances Control, Director of Pesticide Regulation, Director of Managed Health Care, Director of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, Director of California Bay-Delta Authority, Director of California Conservation Corps, Director of Technology, Director of Emergency Services, Director of the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety, Director of Cannabis Control, Director of Conservation, Director of Community Services and Development, the State Architect, Director of Fair Employment and Housing, Director of the California Department of Aging, State Fire Marshal, Director of Boating and Waterways, Chairperson of the Board of Parole Hearing, Chairperson of the Occupational Safety and Health Appeals Board, Chairperson of the Board of Juvenile Hearings, and the President of the Public Utilities Commission (Government Code Section 19825.5).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown.

COMMENTS: *Terminology.* State law includes provision regarding employees of the CSU, these provisions are contained in EDC Sections 66600-66611 and 89500-89574. Within these code sections are a myriad of terms used to describe CSU employees: academic, nonacademic, administrative, athletic, contractors, principal officer of the BOT, executive, and principal officer of the CSU. AB 1831 (Ahrens) seeks to introduce new categories of CSU employee with the terms "administrator," "manager", and "other employee who is not represented by an employee organization." CSU has eleven units or categories of employees who are represented by an employee organization or a labor union; which include, but are not limited to: California Faculty Association, California State University Employees Unions, Teamsters Local 2010, and the Academic Student Employees. AB 1831 (Ahrens) wishes to categorize employees into two factions for purposes the salary cap and the limitations on salary adjustments; specifically. The measure establishes the distinction between those who are represented by a labor union and those who are not. For purposes of this analysis, the following terms will be used to describe CSU employees:

1) Non-represented employees – these are employees who are administrators, managers, executives, athletic coaches, contractors, nonacademic/nonmanagement positions, and principal officers. The salary cap and limits on salary adjustments, proposed by AB 1831 (Ahrens) will apply to these employees; and,

2) Represented employees – these employees are those who are represented by a labor union. These employees include faculty, and nonacademic represented employees. The salary cap and limits on salary adjustments proposed by AB 1831 (Ahrens) will not apply to these employees.

Author's statement. The author expresses the need for the provision as "enough is enough: CSU administrators are public civil servants and should not be getting rich on the backs of California families. It is outrageous that the California State University system is approving massive pay increases for administrators already making more than our Governor or the U.S. President while raising student tuition and fees, cutting classes and student services, and not honoring pay agreements made with their staff. AB 1831 (Ahrens) will rein in out-of-control CSU administrator compensation and center the focus of CSU management on California students and families being able to access affordable, quality public higher education."

As stipulated above in the *terminology* section of this analysis, AB 1831 (Ahrens) is not limited in scope to only administrative or managerial positions at the CSU. The measure would apply to any employee who is not represented by a labor union. This would include secretarial positions, analyst positions, government relations, and staff who are considered nonmanagement nonadministrative, but lack the representation of a union.[1] Based on figures provided by the CSU, this measure would impact the salaries of 6,635 non-represented employees. The measure would cap these employees' salaries to $307,031.25 in the current year and in outlying years to 125% of the Governor's Salary as determined by the California Compensation Commission in the given year.[2] Furthermore, the measure would prevent the 6,635 non-represented employees from receiving salary increases in a year when tuition is increased by the BOT.

Moving forward if the intention is to limit the scope of the measure to those in managerial, executive, or administrative positions, the author may wish to change the scope of the measure to say "employees in a management, executive, or administrative position that is not represented by an employee organization."

Recent BOT actions regarding compensation and tuition increases. The author has indicated recent BOT decisions on compensation for executives, compensation for represented employees, and the increases in student tuition were the impetus for the measure. On September 13, 2023, the BOT approved a multi-year revenue stability plan for systemwide tuition increases. The plan would increase each year by 6%, beginning in the 2024-2025 academic year and ending in the 2028-2029 academic year.[3] The increases are as follows:[4]

Undergraduate, Credential and Graduate Programs

The following tables show the full- and part-time current and proposed tuition rates for undergraduate, credential and graduate programs.

Summer rates would increase beginning with the summer 2025 term.

Academic Year

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Undergraduate (6.1+ units)	$ 5,742	$ 6,084	$ 6,450	$ 6,838	$ 7,248	$ 7,682
Undergraduate (0-6 units)	$ 3,330	$ 3,528	$ 3,738	$ 3,962	$ 4,200	$ 4,452
Credential (6.1+ units)	$ 6,660	$ 7,062	$ 7,488	$ 7,938	$ 8,414	$ 8,918
Credential (0-6 units)	$ 3,864	$ 4,098	$ 4,344	$ 4,604	$ 4,880	$ 5,172
Graduate (6.1+ units)	$ 7,176	$ 7,608	$ 8,064	$ 8,548	$ 9,060	$ 9,604
Graduate (0-6 units)	$ 4,164	$ 4,416	$ 4,680	$ 4,960	$ 5,258	$ 5,574

The justification for the increase was the need for additional revenue sources to address ongoing expenditures for financial aid, enrollment, student basic needs and mental health, the Graduation Initiative, Title IX and DHR programs, NAGPRA compliance, facilities improvements, and faculty and staff compensation.[3] The tuition proposal was approved because the State's promised

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[1] https://csucareers.calstate.edu/en-us/filter/?=&leftNavSearchFormQuery=&=&search=&search-keyword=&work-type=management%20%28mpp%29&work-type=staff&job-mail-subscribe-privacy=agree
[2] https://www.calhr.ca.gov/california-citizens-compensation-commission/cccc-salaries/
[3] https://www.calstate.edu/apply/paying-for-college/tuition-increase/Documents/24-25-TUITION-PROPOSAL.pdf
[4] https://www.calstate.edu/apply/paying-for-college/tuition-increase/Pages/proposed-tuition-adjustments.aspx

5% annual increase for base operations was not sufficient to cover the expounding costs of running the CSU system. However, the proposal provided to the BOT only provided a fiscal analysis for the upcoming fiscal year, both in the revenue generated by the new tuition increases and the anticipated expenditures. In the Chancellor's Office frequently asked questions page for the tuition increase, the CSU states the additional revenues from the CSU tuition increases will be used to benefit student through services including, but not limited to:

1) Tutoring, peer mentoring, and academic support;

2) Cultural centers (space, staffing and programming);

3) Title IX efforts to include bystander and prevention education;

4) Increasing the number of students participating in high-impact practices such as undergraduate research, international experiences and internships;

5) Early alert systems and case management efforts to support student retention and persistence;

6) Increased efforts to re-engage and re-enroll students who have dropped out of college; and,

7) On-campus student employment opportunities.[5]

Given the ongoing annual tuition increase, the Committee and the author may wish to reconsider the scope of personnel who are included in the language containing the salary freeze. The measure, in its current form, would result in 6,635 CSU employees being ineligible for a salary increase from January 1, 2027 until the fall of 2029.

In 2022, the Governor entered into a multi-year compact with the CSU where the system would receive a five percent increase to its base operation costs each year in exchange for meeting student success criteria set forth in the compact. For three budget cycles, the CSU received an annual increase of five percent for its base operation funds. However, in 2025-2026 State Budget, the CSU general fund allocation was only increased by 2.4% for a total of $5.6 billion.[6]

As previously mentioned, the CSU has collective bargaining agreement with eleven different union for the 78,621 represented employees. The two largest unions are the California Faculty Association (CFA) and the California State Employees Union (CSUEU. In October 2023, CSUEU entered into an agreement with CSU and agreed to the following increase for nonacademic staff: 5% increase in year one, an additional 5% salary increase in year two, and the creation of a salary step schedule where step advancement would be compensated at 2% per step increase in year three.[7] The increases for year two (24/25) and steps in year three (25/26) were conditional upon the State fully funding the CSU in the scheduled year.[6] The CSU has asserted since overall general fund allocations from the State have decreased by approximately $144 million in the Budget Act of 2025, the CSU is not bound to honor the steps clause in the contract. CSUEU has contended that full funding was provided in the sum of $133 million in new funding and the acquisition of a state loan for the remaining $144 million, equaling the full 5% increase

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[5] https://www.calstate.edu/apply/paying-for-college/tuition-increase/Pages/frequently-asked-questions.aspx
[6] https://lao.ca.gov/Education/EdBudget/Details/1022
[7] Communique

as promised by the State.[8] This continues to be an ongoing infliction point between the unions and the administration at the CSU. CFA, which represents faculty, also entered into a multi-year collective bargaining agreement with CSU for a three-year period, covering February 2022 – June 2025. Faculty received 5% salary increases in 2023/2024 and 2024/2025. CFA recently agreed to an extension of the existing contract through March 31, 2026; however, the extension does not include additional salary increases for faculty.[9]

In May 2024, the BOT updated the CSU policy on compensation to limit base salaries of incoming Campus Presidents to no more than 10% above the previous President's salary. In November 2025, after a year of upheaval with multiple Presidents leaving the CSU, the BOT once again sought to overhaul the executive compensation policy.[10] In an effort to recruit and retain talented and qualified Presidents, the Chancellor's Office commissioned a study to review executive salaries. The study found the CSU's retirement and health benefits were above the market average in competitiveness for Campus Presidents; however, the study found the base salary offered for the position of Campus Presidents were not considered competitive when compared to base salaries of executives in peer industries. Essentially, CSU Campus Presidents were not meeting the market median for salary compensation, and their salaries were considered in the bottom quartile of all salaries examined by the study. Furthermore, the study found that the CSU policy on compensation was not producing competitive or even market-rate salaries when compared to peer higher education institutions.[10]

To address this inequity, the BOT adopted a new executive compensation salary policy, approved raises for an array of vice presidents, and approved salary increases for 13 of the 22 campus presidents. The new executive compensation policy:

1) Establishes new ranges for initial salaries for incoming presidents to align compensation with a competitive range – within 85% and 110% of the market median established through comparing salaries against peer institutions nationally, and adjusting the salary within the range based on the candidate's experience, performance, and institutional scope;

2) Provides annual increases for incumbent presidents in alignment with the general salary increases provided to faculty and staff. This is generally considered a cost-of-living adjustment; and,

3) Provides annual eligibility for a performance incentive salary increases for all incumbent presidents. This will allow Campus Presidentsto annually increase their salary up to 15% of the base salary, if the Campus president achieves performance goals directly related to the CSU's strategic priorities. The Chancellor will provide a performance review for each of the presidents and provide recommendations for the increase to the BOT. This generally considered a merit salary increase, and is meant to promote transparency, accountability, and performance excellence.[10]

The 13 Campus Presidents received increases during the November 2025 meeting:

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[8] https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/faculty-staff/labor-and-employee-relations/Pages/budget-and-labor-agreement-faq.aspx
[9] https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/faculty-staff/labor-and-employee-relations/Pages/unit3-cfa.aspx
[10] https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/board-of-trustees/past-meetings/2025/Documents/Nov-17-19-2025-UFP.pdf

- Cal Policy – San Luis Obispo – President received a 20% increase for a new annual salary of $611,203;
- California State University, San Diego – President received a 4.9% increase for a new annual salary of $559,805;
- California State University, San José – President received a 15% increase for a new annual salary of $546,066;
- California State University, Northridge – President received a 14.9% increase for a new annual salary of $563,012;
- California State University, Sacramento – President received a 5.6% increase for a new annual salary of $504,799;
- Cal State Fullerton – President received a 5% increase for a new annual salary of $523,037;
- Fresno State University – President received a 9.5% increase for a new annual salary of $523,617;
- San Francisco State University – President received a 10% increase for a new annual salary of $520,143;
- California State University, Los Angeles – President received a 5% increase for a new annual salary of $521,024;
- Cal State San Bernardino – President received a 4.9% increase for a new annual salary of $477,961;
- California State University, San Marcos – President received a 5% increase for a new annual salary of $467,795;
- California State University, Dominguez Hills – President received a 5% increase for a new annual salary of $476,670; and,
- California State University, Monterey Bay – President received a 14% salary for new annual salary of $421,800.[10]

The total increase in the new base salaries for each of the Campus Presidents listed above is a total annual cost increase of $565,901 to the CSU.

Committee staff note the CSU did not provide Campus Presidents with any salary increases in three years prior to this salary increase.

Competitive and comparable salaries for CSU positions. The Education Code asks the CSU BOT to provide initial salaries and increases in salaries for all positions in manner that allows the salary to be a competitive offer when compared to other educational institutions, private industries, or public jurisdictions that are employing personnel with similar duties and responsibilities. The CSU is a four-year public higher education institution, who educates on average 460,000 students and employes 63,000 staff annually. The CSU has 23 (soon to be 22) active and thriving campuses, each acting and operating like a small city with campus housing, athletics, and campus entertainment. Each Campus President is tasked with overseeing the daily operations of the campus ensuring that the faculty, students, and employees are safe and matriculating in their academic and professional goals.

The largest CSU campus is Cal State Fullerton, with 45,147 students enrolled in Fall 2025.[11] The Campus President receives $523,037 in annual salary compensation. Saddleback Community College in the South Orange Community College District in California enrolled 46,059 students in the 2024-2025 academic year and employed 1,355 staff.[12] The President of Saddleback College has a base annual salary of $349,577 in 2024.[13] Mt. San Antonio Community College had the largest enrollment figures of any community college in the 2024-2025 academic year, at 77,304 students, and employed 2,106 staff.[12] The President of Mt. San Antonio Community College has a base annual salary of $364,144. The University of California, San Diego, a four-year public research institution, enrolled 45,057 students in Fall 2025. The University of California, San Diego Chancellor has an annual salary of $1.14 million.[14] The University of California, Berkeley enrolled 46,151 students in Fall 2025 and the Chancellor receives an annual salary of $496,450.[14]

Committee staff note the University of California (UC) is governed by the UC Board of Regents who also adopted a tuition increase in recent years and salary increase for their campus executives. To the knowledge of this Committee, the Legislature has not issued a letter nor a bill admonishing the UC for increasing the annual executive compensation of their campus executives and then months later, adopting a tuition increase.[15]

One could argue the California Community Colleges (CCC) are not a peer equivalent institution to the CSU; as the CSU are a four-year institution tasked with providing baccalaureate and master level degrees and applied research doctoral degrees for the state of California. However, in recent years the State Legislature has expanded the mission of the CCC to include the conferral of baccalaureate degrees and CCC enrollment figures on average equal or exceed the enrollment figures of CSU campuses. One could also argue the CSU's equivalent is the UC. However, the UC runs medical centers, conducts theoretical research, and is California's primary and leading research higher education institution. In terms of size, both in enrollment figures and employment of staff, the UC dwarfs in comparison to the CSU.

When determining the "peer institutions" for the executive compensation report, the CSU examined data gathered from *The Chronicle for Higher Education*, contracts received either directly from the CSU or from Freedom of Information Act requests, and research from public sources.[10] The Education Code and Government Code asks the CSU to examine and compare executive salaries with the salaries of those from other higher education institutions, private

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https://tableau.calstate.edu/views/SelfEnrollmentDashboard/EnrollmentSummary?iframeSizedToWindow=true&%3Aembed=y&%3AshowAppBanner=false&%3Adisplay_count=no&%3AshowVizHome=no
12 https://datamart.cccco.edu/Students/Student_Headcount_Term_Annual.aspx and https://datamart.cccco.edu/Faculty-Staff/Staff_Annual.aspx
13 https://publicpay.ca.gov/Reports/PositionDetail.aspx?employeeid=38732491
14 https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-09-20/uc-chancellors-get-big-raises
15 https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/regmeet/sept24/g3.pdf and https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-11-19/uc-regents-tuition-increase-university-of-california

industry, and public jurisdictions whose executives conduct similar duties and have similar roles and responsibilities. Without transparency on how the CSU executive compensation study was conducted, it is impossible to check if the salaries of the other educational institutions, private industry, or public jurisdictions examined by the CSU were employing personnel with similar duties and responsibilities as the CSU. Furthermore, without a clear parameter in State law as to what constitutes an "educational institutions, private industry, or public jurisdictions that are employing personnel with similar duties and responsibilities," the CSU is left to interpret this law and to provide compensation as approved by the BOT. This measure limits the salary compensation for non-represented staff, including Campus Presidents, to 125% of the Governor's Compensation regardless of whether the salary is competitive or not.

Non-represented staff vs. represented staff. As previously stated, this measure would sort staff at the CSU into a codified bifurcated system of those with a salary cap and those without. It would also create an arbitrary cap on the salary increases of those who may have no influence over tuition increase at the CSU. The measure does not solely impact the salaries of Campus Presidents. The bill impacts any employee at the CSU who is not currently represented by a union.

The Committee may wish to consider if this creates an incentive for non-represented employees to unionize as they will not receive a raise foreseeable until 2030.

The bill impacts non-represented employees at the CSU which include analysts, Title IX coordinators, legal counsel, government relations, human resources and pay roll analysts, confidential secretaries, athletic coaches, Deans of colleges, Vice President's, Presidents, Vice Chancellors, and the Chancellor of the CSU. According to the CSU Chancellor's Office, the measure would impact 6,635 employees; of whom 155 make more than $307,411 a year.

However, according to the CSU, 37 represented employees also make more than 125% of the Governor's salary. If the intention is to limit the salaries of all employees at the CSU to the cap for most civil servants, then the cap should be placed equally among all employees. By creating a disparity in the application of the salary cap, the measure may have the unintended consequence of outsourcing talent who may be dissuaded from staying at the CSU due to the inability to grow in their chosen field. The salary cap may have the unintended consequence of creating a fiscal barrier for faculty to take administrative or managerial positions at the CSU. If a faculty member were to consider taking administrative or managerial positions, it would result in them moving from being a represented employee to a nonrepresented employee and thus, subject to the salary cap. The CSU already has a difficult time recruiting and retaining competent non-represented staff when their local competitors, and under the provisions of the bill the CCC and UC, can and will pay more.

The Committee may wish to consider whether this measure will exasperate the talent drain from the CSU while also fueling the disparity between represented and non-represented employees at the CSU.

Arguments in support. CFA argues the need for the measure as "the lowest-paid full-time lecturer makes just over $66,000 a year, but most lecturers are not fulltime and make less than half that amount. In comparison, the lowest-paid CSU campus president makes $370,000 a year and usually receives a housing allowance and/or car allowance on top of that pay. That is a 460% difference, or roughly what five full-time lecturers make. Adding insult to injury, instead of offering CSU employee real raises, CSU management recently proposed giving a paltry one-time bonus equal to 3% of an employee's salary. The California legislature has an opportunity to send a strong message to the CSU about our state's values."

The Teamsters California is supportive of the measure as "AB 1831 is a commonsense reform the ensures the California State University (CSU) priorities student over management."

UAW Local 4123 is in support of the measure as the union represents "10,000 Academic Student Workers who teach, tutor, mentor, and grade across the 23 CSU campuses. Most UAW 4123 members are eligible for and rely on both SNAP and Medi-Cal benefits, while teaching and providing academic support that is crucial to the success of the University. CSU management has proposed only one-time 3% bonuses for Academic Student Workers, while approving salary increases and bonuses for top paid executives who make a minimum of $370,000 a year. The California legislature has an opportunity to send a strong message to the CSU about our state's values. Do we believe that executive compensation should be paid on the backs of students taking on more debt and the backs of faculty, some of whom earn so little they are housing and food insecure?"

Arguments in opposition. The Chancellor's Office of the CSU respectfully opposes the measure as "AB 1831 would impose a fixed salary cap tied to a percentage of the Governor's salary for all non-represented CSU employees. This approach does not account for a university's size, complexity, or the labor market for higher education leaders and employees. Additionally, this bill does not apply to any other state agency or California public higher education institution. According to the Association of California Community College Administrators, approximately 60% of community college presidents' salaries are above the thresholds established by this bill, effectively placing the CSU at a disadvantage in recruiting and retaining key positions when the same restrictions do not apply to the University of California or the California Community Colleges."

The Chancellor's Office of the CSU further contends that the, "rigid statutory cap would reduce CSU's flexibility and limit its ability to remain competitive in recruiting and retaining qualified leaders and employees. Additionally, the bill would prohibit compensation adjustments for CSU employees who are not represented by a labor union in any year in which tuition is increased. This would impact thousands of employees, including those that work on financial aid, student housing, basic needs and academic programing. Tuition policy and employee compensation are separate governance matters driven by different fiscal and operational considerations."

The Chancellor's Office of the CSU concludes their formal opposition by stating "finally, mandating repeal of Board-approved compensation resolutions would create instability and intrude upon the governance authority granted to the CSU Board of Trustees in statute. The Board is charged with establishing and adjusting compensation for CSU employees and does so through public processes informed by market data and stakeholder input, as well as through collective bargaining."

Committee comments. AB 1831 (Ahrens) would impact the CSU by:

1) Instilling a salary cap beginning on January 1, 2027 for all non-represented employees. The salary cap would be the equivalent of the 125% of the Governor's salary. Currently, this sum is equal $307,411.25. As this is not retroactive, it would not require the CSU to reduce employees salaries to the cap; however, it does mean the employees over the cap would not receive salary increases;

2) Prohibiting any salary increases for non-represented staff in a year where tuition has increased for students; and,

3) Retroactively repealing the salary increases provided to the Campus President at the November 2025 board meeting.

Questions have been raised regarding the legality of repealing the salary increases provided to Campus Presidents on November 19, 2025. The language, though not codified, is legally binding; however, the question remains whether the repeal of the salaries would be seen as a violation of California Constitution, specifically the contract clause for the right of compensation owed to public employees.

This measure was not referred to Assembly Committee on the Judiciary nor the Assembly Committee on Public Employment and Retirement; therefore, the Committee should consider whether this measure represents a plausible litigation liability for the CSU who may be sued by Campus Presidents for a breach of contract if their salary increases are repealed.

The term compensation is used in this measure and is understood by the author to mean base salary. However, in the Education Code the term compensation is used to describe base salary, healthcare benefits, retirement benefits, and additional benefits such as housing and car allowances.

Moving forward, the author may wish to amend the measure to clarify the meaning of compensation.

The salary cap proposed by this measure is not a random figure, but rather the same salary cap imposed upon State's executives who run vast state agencies on behalf of the people of California. However, the proposed salary cap does not align the CSU Campus President salaries with their California public higher education counterparts.

In a salary survey conducted by the Association of California Community College Administrators, the average annual salary for single college district executives was $323,777 and the average annual salary for multiple district college executives $398,106. Only 13 community college executives in California make equal to or less than the salary cap proposed by this measure. Based on the salary increases provided by the UC Regents in September 2024, the average salary of a UC Campus Chancellor is $695,974.[16] The new average salary of a CSU president is $402,994.

With this knowledge, it does seem as though when compared with its sister systems, the CSU falls within the median range of executive salaries and therefore, would be considered a competitive alternative. However, the new salary cap introduced by this measure would relegate the CSU executive compensation range below what is offered by the CCC and CSU and would render the system uncompetitive compared to their California public institution counterparts.

The author may wish to consider amending the bill to include community college executives or to provide a different definition for the max salary allotted by this measure, to ensure the CSU is still considered a competitive option for executive recruitment.

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[16] https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/regmeet/sept24/g3.pdf

If the intention of the author is to hold the CSU accountable as a public serving institution, perhaps there are alternative methods to the accountability than repealing salary increases and introducing a salary cap.

Moving forward, the Committee suggests the author consider one or all of following proposed alternatives for holding the CSU accountable:

1) *On or before July 1, 2027, the Trustees of the California State University shall repeal the Board of Trustees Policy on Executive Compensation, described in Item 9 of the Committee on the University and Faculty Personnel at the November 17-19, 2025, meeting of the Board of Trustees. On or before July 1, 2027, the Trustees of the California State University shall adopt a new Board of Trustees Policy on Executive Compensation that aligns initial salaries for Presidents with the candidates experience and comparable higher education institutions. The Policy shall also condition annual salary increases to the performance of the on the President's performance to meet institutional and segmental goals.*

2) *Notwithstanding subdivision (c) of Section 66609, for any fiscal year in which the trustees authorize an increase in student tuition, the trustees shall not increase the compensation of an executive president.*

3) *Notwithstanding subdivision (c) of Section 66609, for any fiscal year in which the trustees do not authorize salary increase for represented staff, the trustees shall not increase the compensation of an executive president.*

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Faculty Association
California School Employees Association
California State University Employees Union (CSUEU)
Teamsters California
UAW Local 4123
UAW Region 6

Opposition

California State University, Office of the Chancellor

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