

Date of Hearing: April 14, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Mike Fong, Chair

AB 1713 (Ransom) – As Amended March 16, 2026

SUBJECT: Public postsecondary education: students with disabilities: verification: academic accommodations

SUMMARY: Requires a public postsecondary education institution to accept a 504 plan or an individualized education plan as a verification document of a student’s disability for purposes of the provision of reasonable accommodations for the student by a public higher education institution. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Defines for purposes of the measure the following terms:
 - a) “504 plan” means a plan adopted pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1974;
 - b) “IEP” means an individual education program adopted pursuant to Chapter 4 of Part 30 of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education Code and the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
 - c) “Local education agency” means a school district, county office of education, or charter school; and,
 - d) “Public higher education institution” or “institution” means a campus of the California Community College (CCC), the California State University (CSU), or the University of California (UC).
- 2) Requires a public higher education institution, beginning on September 1, 2027, to accept an IEP or/and a 504 plan as documentation to verify a student’s disability if the institution requires documentation to verify the existence of a disability for purposes of fulfilling an academic accommodation request from a student. The IEP and 504 plans must be issued by a local education agency.
- 3) Prohibits a public higher education institution, beginning on September 1, 2027, from requiring a student to obtain a new or additional diagnostic evaluation to verify the existence of a disability prior to granting a student a reasonable accommodation, if the student has produced an IEP or 504 plan with documentation of the disability.
- 4) Permits a public higher education institution, beginning on September 1, 2027, to require supplemental information from a student with an IEP or 504 plan. The supplemental information will only be requested and used to determine the type of accommodation the student requires to ensure the academic requirements of the institution do not have a discriminating affect or effect against the student. A postsecondary education institution is prohibited from using the supplemental information to invalidate or dispute the student’s disability as documented in the IEP or 504 plan as issued by a local education agency.

- 5) Requires the entirety of the measure to be implemented in accordance with the American Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- 6) Clarifies that the provisions of the measure do not apply to a public higher education institutions implementation of Title IX of the federal Education Amendments of 1972.
- 7) Subjects the University of California to the provisions of the measure.

EXISTING LAW: *Federal law.*

- 1) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act states no person with a disability in the United States will be denied benefits or be subjected to discrimination based on their disability in any program or activity that receives federal financial assistance. This applies to postsecondary education institutions who receive federal funding and therefore, the institutions are subject to the regulations promulgated by the Federal Government to address and prevent discrimination of people with disabilities (United States Code (USC), Title 29, Chapter 16, Subchapter V, Section 794, Colloquially known as “Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act).
- 2) The American with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in everyday activities. Establishes people with disabilities as a protected class and prohibits discrimination in the same manner as prohibitions against racial or sex discrimination. This law guarantees that people with disabilities have the same employment opportunities, ability to access goods and services, and the ability to participate in state and local government programs (USC Title 42, Chapter 126).

State law.

- 1) The Unruh Civil Rights Act, states all people in California are free and equal and no matter their sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, medical condition, genetic condition, marital status, sexual orientation, citizenship, primary language, or immigration status and are entitled to the full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services in all business establishments of ever kind whatsoever (Civil Code section 51).
- 2) Defines disability for the Equity in Higher Education Act to mean a mental or physical disability (Education Code (EDC) Section 66260.5).
- 3) Prohibits a postsecondary education institution that receives state funding from discriminating against anyone on the basis of disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any characteristic listed or defined in Section 11135 of the Government Code or any other characteristic that is contained in the prohibition of hate crimes set forth in subdivision (a) of Section 422.6 of the Penal Code, including immigration status (EDC Section 66270).
- 4) Stipulates no provision of the Donahue Higher Education Act shall apply to the UC unless the UC Regents adopts the provision (Education Code (EDC) Section 67400).
- 5) States that it is the desire and intention of the Legislature to provide funding for disabled student programs and services and that the funding provided will be based on three categories of cost:

- a) Fixed cost associated with the ongoing administration and operation of services and programs;
 - b) Continuing variable costs that fluctuate with changes in the number of students receiving the services and the type of services provided. Services covered by this cost can include diagnostic assessments, on-campus mobility assistance, disability-related counseling and advising, interpreter services, reader services, special class instruction, speech services, adaptations in course testing, transcript services, notetakers, and specialized tutoring; and,
 - c) One-time variable cost associated with equipment for disabled students or disabled students' services (EDC Section 67311).
- 6) Beginning in the fall of 2026, the California State University (CSU) is required and the UC along with the independent colleges and universities are requested to establish a "Disability Access and Compliance Training Program" for their campus to ensure that campus personnel are aware: (a) of the legal and procedural responsibility of the institution to provide effective accommodations for disabled students and (b) on the resources available on campus for disabled students (EDC Section 67312.5).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown.

COMMENTS: *Author's intent.* As explained by the author, "AB 1713 is focused on providing students with disabilities recognition of their unique needs to ensure they are able to participate in California's world-renowned higher education system without difficulty or discrimination. AB 1713 will require institutions of higher education to accept a student's diagnosis from their IEP or Section 504 Plan from their previous educational institution, fast-tracking their access to the accommodations they need and allowing them to spend more time in the classroom and less time in the doctor's office."

The author further adds, "the enactment of AB 1713 will require institutions of higher education to accept the medical diagnosis associated with a student's IEP or 504 plan so that the student can be assessed and receive accommodations for their unique needs as quickly as possible."

Disabled students and the right of equal access to education. Both federal civil rights laws and state civil rights laws prohibit a higher education institution from discriminating against a student based on their actual or perceived disability. Both federal and state laws outline the roles and responsibilities of higher education institutions to provide modifications to existing academic programs to ensure a student maintains equal access under the law. These modifications are known as reasonable accommodations. While the laws governing disability rights cover both K-12 schools and higher education institutions, there is a primary difference in the scope of services provided. A K-12 school is obligated to provide accommodations that will ensure the student's academic success; whereas a higher education institution is required to provide accommodations that maintain equal access for the student.¹

This core difference in the outcomes of the services for disabled students in K-12 vs higher education is elementary in how and when services are provided. The chart below shows the differences between K-12 and higher education requirements under the law:

¹ 2022 AHED Survey Results – California State University Systemwide.

K-12 Local Education Agencies	Higher Education Institutions
Focus is on student success	Focus is on student access
The local education agency is responsible for identifying a student’s disability, determining eligibility for services, and implementing appropriate accommodations.	Students identify their request for services to the disability office and provide documentation that verifies eligibility for accommodations specific to a functional limitation.
Individual Education Plans (IEP) or 504 Plans are created to guide the students’ instruction and to identify the mandates services required to ensure the student’s success.	After the student requests accommodation, the institution begins an interactive interview process. During this interview process, reasonable accommodation is requested and identified to ensure equal access and participation.
School-based services based on demonstrated need are put in place to promote success, such as special education classes, co-teaching and resource room, assistants or personal aides, speech therapy/OT/PT.	College accommodations are intended to mitigate the impact of a disability on access to education. Accommodations may include alternative testing arrangements, assistive technology or software, and counseling. ²

AB 1713 (Ransom) seeks to take the documentation created during a student’s time in the K-12 education system and to apply this documentation to higher education institutions for purposes of identifying a student’s disability. The student has already received testing from qualified individuals and therefore the documentation of an IEP or 504 Plan should qualify a student for disability services at a public higher education institution. AB 1713 (Ransom) does not require the same support services, accommodations, or academic modifications contained within the IEP or 504 Plan to be implemented by the public higher education institution; but rather, requires the institution to use the IEP or 504 Plan as a verification document of the student’s disability.

Disability services at public higher education institutions. Each public higher education institution in the state of California provides disabled services and programs to students with disabilities. In the 2024-2025 academic year, the CCCs served 129,970 disabled students at community colleges throughout the state.³ In a report to the Legislature from 2024, the CCC Chancellor’s Office explains the, “Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) assist students with disabilities, to ensure they have equal access to all educational programs and activities. DSPS provides personalized support services to students with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, psychological disabilities, developmental delays, brain injuries, visual impairments, health problems and hearing impairments. Among the array of services offered to students are priority registration, class scheduling assistance, specialized counseling and tutoring, mobility assistance, test proctoring, transcription services and interpreter services for hearing

² <https://cae.ucla.edu/resources/k12-postsecondary-education>

³ Data Mart CCC Chancellor’s Office

impaired or deaf students.”⁴ The accommodations provided by the DSPS program are so impactful to a student’s ability to matriculate towards a degree, that data showed CCC DSPS students who enrolled during the 2019-2020 academic year and graduated in the 2023-2024 academic year had higher completion rates than their non-disabled counterparts.⁴

Every CSU campus has a “Student’s with Disabilities Office” to provide services and accommodations to students with a certified disability.⁵ In fall 2023, the CSU enrolled 21,753 students who identified as having a disability.⁶ The CSU has a systemwide policy for “The Provision of Accommodations and Support Services to Students with Disabilities;” which, encapsulates the type of disabilities the CSU recognizes as requiring accommodations and the types of documentation a student may be asked to produce to verify the disability. The policy permits “documentation from external sources [including] educational or medical records, reports and assessments created by health care providers, school psychologists, teachers, or the educational system.”⁷

In a presentation to the UC Regents in March 2025, it was reported that the UC enrolled 65,802 undergraduate students with a disability in the 2023-2024 academic year.⁸ All ten UC campuses have a disability services office with specialized staff equipped to provide services and supports to meet the individual need of disabled students. The services provided by these disability service offices includes reading services, note-taking services, diction and transcription, deaf and hard-of-hearing services, housing and dining accommodations, and transportation accommodations.⁸ Of the 65,802 students identifying as disabled, 23,472 received accommodations, roughly 31%.⁸

AB 1713 (Ransom) allows students to be able to produce verifiable documentation to seamlessly demonstrate a disability to a public higher education institution for purposes of seeking academic accommodations. This measure seeks to reduce out-of-pocket expenses for disabled students by permitting a student to use an IEP or 504 Plan as sufficient evidence of a disability instead of costly medical test or third-party tests to verify the disability.

Arguments in support. As stated by the Disability Resources Agency for Independent Living, “through our work, we regularly hear from students and families who face unnecessary barriers when transitioning from K–12 to higher education. Despite existing protections under laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, students are often required to resubmit documentation, meet different verification standards, or even obtain updated medical diagnoses for conditions that are already well-established. These duplicative processes can delay access to accommodations, create financial burdens, and discourage students from fully engaging in their education. AB 1713 provides a practical and thoughtful solution by requiring institutions of higher education to accept a student’s existing medical diagnosis in conjunction with their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. By recognizing prior documentation, this bill helps streamline access to accommodations and reduces unnecessary barriers.”

⁴ <https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/docs/report/2024-disabled-student-programs-and-service-legislative-report-a11y.pdf?la=en&hash=7F37AD8FB7A149D25E39B1B46C92626ED0D1CABE>

⁵ <https://www.calstate.edu/attend/student-services/Pages/service-for-students-with-disabilities.aspx>

⁶ <https://www.calstate.edu/attend/student-services/Pages/service-for-students-with-disabilities.aspx> - Students with disabilities profile and statistics

⁷ <https://calstate.policystat.com/policy/14568219/latest/>

⁸ <https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/regmeet/mar25/a2.pdf>

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Disability Resources Agency for Independent Living (DRAIL)
National Center for Learning Disabilities

Opposition

None on file.

Analysis Prepared by: Ellen Cesaretti-Monroy / HIGHER ED. / (916) 319-3960