



GOVERNANCE, TRANSPARENCY, AND LABOR RELATIONS POLICY COMMITTEE

Thursday, March 26, 2026

10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa

AGENDA

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Christine Cordon, City Manager, Westminster

Vice Chair Jill McLewis, Mayor, Sebastopol

II. Public Comment

III. State Legislative Update

Informational

IV. Ballot Measure Agenda (Attachment A)

Action

- [SB 42 \(Umberg\) Political Reform Act of 1974: public campaign financing: California Fair Elections Act of 2026. \(Ch. 245, 2025\)](#)

V. Legislative Agenda (Attachment B)

Action

- [AB 2134 \(Addis\) City Council Members: Absences Without Permission.](#)

VI. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Roundtable

Informational

Questions for discussion:

- How is your city using Artificial Intelligence?
- Has your city adopted an AI policy? How was that process?
- What have been the biggest AI challenges in your city?

VII. Adjourn

Next Meeting (Virtual): Thursday, June 4, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Brown Act Reminder: The League of California Cities' Board of Directors has a policy of complying with the spirit of open meeting laws. Generally, off-agenda items may be taken up only if:

1) Two-thirds of the policy committee members find a need for immediate action exists and the need to take action came to the attention of the policy committee after the agenda was prepared (Note: If fewer than two-thirds of policy committee members are present, taking up an off-agenda item requires a unanimous vote); or

2) A majority of the policy committee finds an emergency (for example: work stoppage or disaster) exists.

A majority of a city council may not, consistent with the Brown Act, discuss specific substantive issues among themselves at League meetings. Any such discussion is subject to the Brown Act and must occur in a meeting that complies with its requirements.



**GOVERNANCE, TRANSPARENCY, AND LABOR RELATIONS POLICY COMMITTEE
Legislative Agenda**

Staff: Johnnie Pina, Legislative Advocate
Waleed Hojeij, Legislative Affairs and Policy Analyst

SB 42 (Umberg) Political Reform Act of 1974: public campaign financing: California Fair Elections Act of 2026. (Ch. 245, 2025)

Ballot Measure Summary:

The California Fair Elections Act is a statewide ballot measure that would remove the current prohibition on public financing of campaigns in California and restore the ability for general law cities to enact public financing of campaigns. Along with removing the restriction, it also sets up a system for public funding of state and local election campaigns in California.

Ballot Measure Description:

Under current law, California prohibits the use of public funds for campaign financing for the state, counties, districts, and general law cities. Charter cities, however, are exempt due to constitutional home rule authorities and may establish public financing systems.

The measure would repeal that prohibition and set up a system for public funding of state and local election campaigns in California.

Specifically, this measure would:

- Define "public funds" for campaigns as "moneys provided to a candidate by a state or local governmental entity for the purpose of seeking elective office."
- Prohibit a public official or other candidate for office from expending public funds that a state or local entity has earmarked for education, transportation, or public safety for seeking elective office.
- Require candidates in order to qualify for public funds to abide by expenditure limits and meet strict criteria set by statute, ordinance, or charter to demonstrate broad-based support through a large number of small dollar contributions or a similar proxy.
- Prohibit using public funds for legal defense fees or fines or to repay a personal loan made by a candidate to the campaign, including after a campaign's conclusion.
- Prescribe that after enactment the legislature could, by statute, amend this bill's definitions, processes for increasing candidate expenditure limits, and FPPC enforcement responsibilities, but only a vote of the people could amend all other provisions of this bill.
- Specifies that the FPPC shall not enforce a local agency's system of public funding for candidates.
- Increases the fines, by up to three times, for violating the ban on foreign entities making campaign contributions.

Background:

In June 1974, California voters passed Proposition 9 creating the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) and codified significant restrictions and prohibitions on candidates, officeholders, and lobbyists. That initiative is commonly known as the Political Reform Act (PRA). In 1988, voters approved Proposition 73, which amended the PRA to prohibit public campaign financing programs, among other provisions. Since then, the California Supreme Court has ruled that the public financing ban does not apply to charter cities. (*Johnson v. Bradley* (1992) 4 Cal. 4th 389).

SB 1107 (Allen), Chapter 837, Statutes of 2016, sought to authorize the creation of public campaign financing programs by state or local governmental entities through separate actions by those entities. Following the enactment of SB 1107, it was challenged in court, alleging that the changes did not further the purposes of the PRA, and therefore could not be enacted without being approved by voters. In *Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Assn. v. Newsom* (2019) 39 Cal.App.5th 158, the Third District Court of Appeal agreed, finding that SB 1107 "directly conflicts with a primary purpose and mandate of the [PRA], as amended by subsequent voter initiatives, to prohibit public funding of political campaigns." In its decision, the court affirmed a judgment by the Sacramento County Superior Court that enjoined the FPPC from enforcing the public financing related provisions of SB 1107. While those SB 1107 remains in statute, the PRA as enforced by the FPPC continues to prohibit public officers from expending, and candidates from accepting, public moneys for the purpose of seeking elective office.

SB 42 (Umberg) was enacted to place this question before voters, reflecting a broader national trend where jurisdictions are exploring public financing to increase participation, equity, and trust in government.

The GTLR Policy Committee and the Cal Cities Board of Directors voted to support AB 270 (Lee) and SB 24 (Umberg) in 2023. These were prior versions of this ballot measure. This established Cal Cities policy to support the authorization of general law cities to establish public campaign finance programs. SB 42 (Umberg) was supported by Cal Cities and was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor in 2025. It is now set to be on the ballot in November 2026. Cal Cities supported SB 42 by Senator Umberg in 2025 based on our new policy.

Existing Cal Cities Policy:

Cal Cities supports legislation that puts before voters the question of whether general law cities should have the ability to create public campaign financing programs.

Fiscal Impact: The measure itself does not create a direct fiscal impact on local governments because it does not mandate the adoption of public financing programs. Costs would vary significantly depending on program design and participation levels. There is no state reimbursement requirement, as adoption is discretionary.

Additionally, according to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations:

- One-time costs of approximately \$1.1 million to the SOS for printing and mailing expenses associated with placing the measure on the ballot at the next statewide

general election (General Fund (GF)). The SOS estimates this bill will require approximately nine pages be added to the November 3, 2026, General Election Voter Information Guide at an average cost of approximately \$123,000 per page. Actual costs for this bill will depend on the length of the title and summary, analysis by the Legislative Analyst's Office, proponent and opponent arguments, and text of the proposal for publication in the Voter Information Guide.

- This bill requires the redirection of public funds, except those earmarked for education, transportation, or public safety, for public campaign financing, which is, in itself, a significant fiscal effect resulting in GF cost pressures.
- Costs of approximately \$205,000 in the first year and \$198,000 annually thereafter to the FPPC for one additional attorney position to accommodate an increase in advice requests related to the implementation of public financing programs and how such programs would impact existing campaign finance reporting and rules (GF).
- The FPPC also anticipates additional enforcement costs of an unknown amount. Although this bill provides that the FPPC is not responsible for the administration or enforcement of a local public financing program, it is possible that a local agency itself may be subject to FPPC enforcement for improperly administering its local program. In such instances, especially if the FPPC needed to audit the jurisdiction's financial records, enforcement costs may be significant.

Staff Comments: This measure primarily raises a local control and governance question rather than imposing a direct policy mandate. By repealing the statewide prohibition, the measure would expand local authority and allow jurisdictions to determine whether public campaign financing aligns with their community priorities, fiscal capacity, and electoral landscape.

Currently, charter cities in California can enact public campaign financing programs, and at least six (Los Angeles, Long Beach, Oakland, Richmond, Sacramento, and San Francisco) have enacted such programs. This measure would ask voters if they would like to restore control to local governments and the state by giving general law cities, counties, districts, and the state of California the option to enact a public campaign finance program. Cal Cities supports the flexibility this measure would provide to cities.

SUPPORT: (Verified 9/11/25)

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| • California Clean Money Campaign (co-source) | • California Council of Churches Impact |
| • California Common Cause (co-source) | • California Democratic Council |
| • League of Women Voters of California (co-source) | • California Democratic Party |
| • ACLU California Action | • California Donor Table |
| • Asian Law Caucus | • California Environmental Voters |
| • Bay Rising Action | • California Federation of Labor Unions – AFL CIO |
| • California Alliance for Retired Americans | • California Working Families Party |
| • California Black Power Network | • Californians for Disability Rights |
| | • Catalyst California |
| | • CleanEarth4Kids.org |

- Consumer Watchdog
- Courage California
- Culver City Democratic Club
- Dolores Huerta Foundation
- Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
- End Citizens United
- Endangered Habitats League
- Engage San Diego
- Fair Rep LA
- Hmong Innovating Politics
- Indivisible CA: StateStrong
- Indivisible California Green Team
- Inland Empire United
- LA Defensa
- Los Angeles for Democracy Vouchers
- Money Out Voters in
- Move to Amend – Santa Clara County
- Oakland Rising
- Represent.Us
- South Bay Progressive Alliance
- Starting Over Strong
- Unrig LA
- Voters Right to Know
- Wellbeing Economy Alliance California
- Working Partnerships USA
- One individual

OPPOSITION: (Verified 9/11/25)

- California Taxpayers Association
- One individual

Staff Recommendation:

Cal Cities staff recommends the committee discuss and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors.

Committee Recommendation:

Board Action:

GOVERNANCE, TRANSPARENCY AND LABOR RELATIONS POLICY COMMITTEE
Legislative Agenda

Staff: Johnnie Pina, Legislative Advocate
Waleed Hojeij, Legislative Affairs and Policy Analyst

[AB 2134 \(Addis\)](#) City Council Members: Absences Without Permission.
As Amended 03/16/26

Bill Summary:

This bill would prohibit a city from refusing permission for a council member to take absences for parental leave and would exclude parental leave from counting toward the number of allowed absences allotted to each council member. The bill would also prohibit a city from requiring a council member to request approval for their parental leave at a public hearing.

Bill Description:

Existing law provides that if a city council member is absent without permission from all regular city council meetings for 60 days consecutively from the last regular meeting they attended, their office becomes vacant and shall be filled as any other vacancy.

Additionally, if a city council meets monthly or less frequently than monthly and a city council member is absent without permission from all regular city council meetings for 70 days consecutively from the last regular meeting they attended, their office becomes vacant and shall be filled as any other vacancy.

This bill would prohibit a city from refusing permission for a council member to take absences for parental leave and would exclude parental leave from counting toward the number of allowed absences allotted to each council member. The bill would prohibit a city from requiring a council member to request approval for their parental leave at a public hearing. The bill would include findings that changes proposed by this bill address a matter of statewide concern rather than a municipal affair and, therefore, apply to all cities, including charter cities.

Background:

According to the author's factsheet:

AB Assembly Bill 2134, the Family-Friendly City Councils Act, will establish standard minimum protections for parental leave for city councilmembers across California, ensuring that city councilmembers can take absences for parental leave without losing their council seat. It will also exclude parental leave from counting toward the number of absences allowed for each councilmember and end the invasive practice of requiring councilmembers to seek approval for their leave at a public hearing.

These changes will ensure that local elected office is more accessible to all Californians, including those that want to start or grow their family.

According to the author's factsheet, California city councilmembers are not automatically protected by the Family and Medical Leave Act or the California Family Rights Act. As a result, protections for new parents vary across jurisdictions.

Some cities may deny councilmembers parental leave, forcing them to make a difficult choice between taking necessary leave or keeping their council seat. In other cases, cities may allow leave but make the process for seeking approval onerous or invasive.

According to reporting [by San Jose Mercury News](#), Sunnyvale City Councilmember Alysia Cisneros, who recently had her second child, was required to get her leave approved by her fellow councilmembers at a public hearing. Councilmember Cisneros was forced to share personal information about her health in a public forum.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated issue. Even if a city does allow parental leave, many cities, like Sunnyvale, require councilmembers to get their leave approved by their fellow councilmembers at a public hearing.

A lack of workplace protections should not prevent Californians who may want to grow their family from running for local office or force them to lose their seats.

In addition, city councilmembers should not have to share their personal medical information with their colleagues and the public in order to take parental leave. While accountability for public officials is important, they should still be afforded the same privacy around medical issues as other workers.

When our laws make it difficult for new parents to serve in public office, it limits the perspectives that are represented in our local governments.

These changes will ensure that running for and serving in local elected office is more accessible to all California families.

Protected Leave Laws:

California provides multiple, distinct protections for new parents: job-protected unpaid leave under the California Family Rights Act (CFRA) (generally 12 weeks for baby bonding), pregnancy disability leave (PDL) (up to four months of job-protected leave for pregnancy-related disability), and State Paid Family Leave (PFL) (up to eight weeks of partial wage replacement, typically 70–90%, without job protection). These benefits operate together but serve different functions, with PDL and CFRA often used sequentially to provide extended job-protected leave, while PFL provides income replacement during eligible periods of leave.

Existing Teleconferencing Rules:

California council members can teleconference under:

- The Brown Act's traditional teleconference rules
 - A member may teleconference if each remote location is posted on the agenda and open to the public, and the public can hear the remote locations.
 - There is no statutory cap on frequency, but every remote location must be publicly accessible and listed on the agenda.
 - Gov. Code §54953 (Brown Act teleconferencing provisions).
- Alternative Teleconferencing Rules
 - Flexibility: Permits remote participation without posting every remote location only if at least a quorum of members participates in person from a single public location within the agency's boundaries (that location must be on the agenda and open to the public).
 - Permitted reasons:
 - Childcare or caregiving need of a child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, or domestic partner that requires them to participate remotely. "Child," "parent," "grandparent," "grandchild," and "sibling"
 - A contagious illness that prevents a member from attending in person.
 - A need related to a physical or mental condition that is not subject to subdivision (c) of Section 54953.
 - Travel while on official business of the legislative body or another state or local agency.
 - An immunocompromised child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, or domestic partner of the member that requires the member to participate remotely.
 - A physical or family medical emergency that prevents a member from attending in person.
 - Military service obligations that result in a member being unable to attend in person because they are serving under official written orders for active duty, drill, annual training, or any other duty required as a member of the California National Guard or a United States Military Reserve organization that requires the member to be at least 50 miles outside the boundaries of the local agency.
 - Usage limits:
 - Two meetings per year, if the legislative body regularly meets once per month or less.
 - Five meetings per year, if the legislative body regularly meets twice per month.
 - Seven meetings per year, if the legislative body regularly meets three or more times per month.
 - The minutes for the meeting shall identify the specific provision that each member relied upon to participate remotely. This law does not to be read as construed to require the member to disclose any medical diagnosis or disability, or any personal medical information that is otherwise exempt under existing law, including, but not limited to, the Confidentiality of Medical Information Act.

- The member shall participate through both audio and visual technology.
- Brown Act Disability Accommodations
 - The Brown Act now recognizes that a member of a legislative body with a qualifying disability may participate remotely as a reasonable accommodation, codifying the California Attorney General's July 24, 2024 opinion into Government Code §54953.
 - Such members generally must use two-way, real-time audio and video (unless their disability requires an exception).

City Flexibility:

There is no single statewide paternity leave rule for city council members like there are for employees. Some cities and local governments have adopted formal parental-leave or protected-leave rules that cover elected officials and some are in the process of creating them.

Existing Cal Cities Policy:

Elected Officials:

Candidates running for elected office with young children often face the practical reality of paying for increased childcare to campaign and network when running for office. Cal Cities supports increasing diversity of elected officials at all levels and supports the use of campaign funds to pay for childcare expenses resulting from a candidate or officeholder engaging in campaign activities or performing official duties. Cal Cities also supports legislation to increase flexibility and remove limitations on how campaign funds may be used for security expenses.

Children

Cal Cities believes that the children of California must be recognized as our state's most valuable resource. Their development, education, and wellbeing are key to our state's future. Further, it is essential that each child have the support needed to become a productive citizen in the world of the 21st Century. This involves supporting diverse before- and after-school programs and creating stronger linkages between municipal services and school-based job training programs in order to produce more job placement opportunities.

Other Employer and Employee Related Issues

Cal Cities supports efforts to conform the California Family Care Leave Laws to the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) laws. Cal Cities supports the special protection of elected officials, county public defenders, public figures, and public employees acting in their official capacity against threats of death or serious bodily injury.

Cal Cities supports maintaining the confidentiality of personnel matters and protecting public safety personnel discipline records from public disclosure.

Equity in Governance

Cal Cities believes in conducting the business of government with transparency, openness, respect, and civility. The spirit of honest public service is what builds communities. Open decision-making that is of the highest ethical standards honors the public trust. Cal Cities

believes state officials and agencies should conform to the same level of transparency and ethical behavior as is imposed on local officials and agencies.

Cal Cities opposes any law or regulation that applies solely to California cities and local officials, unless such law or regulation also applies equally to the state of California and state officials. Cal Cities acknowledges that local government and state government have their own unique needs. Specific proposals which treat state and local government differently should be carefully reviewed to ensure equity in governance.

Fiscal Impact:

Unknown.

Staff Comments:

In discussions with the Assembly Member's office, it was shared that the Assembly Member has two objectives. The first being to ensure that council members are not penalized (specifically by losing their seat) because they may need to take leave after having a child. They believe this will make city councils more accessible to those who may want to start or expand their family. They do not think folks should be precluded from running for council or risk losing their seat for taking leave.

The second objective is to end the practice of having city council members make their case for their need to take parental leave at a public hearing. They believe council members should not be subjected to sharing their personal medical information with the public, just like any other employee.

The Assembly Member's office shared that they are open to conversations about how to go about accomplishing these goals and would appreciate any feedback. In addition to considering the policy goal, the committee may wish to consider potential amendments regarding local flexibility and implementation suggestions.

Questions and Considerations:

- How is parental leave defined? Would it be the same as how it is defined for employee leave?
- Does the bill imply a maximum leave length or intermittent leave rules?
- What would the duration, notice, and documentation rules be? Would this be open for the city to determine?
- How would a city handle potential quorum shortfalls or emergency decision-making during leave?
- How would this conflict with city charter authority and already existing charter provisions and rules cities may have already adopted?
- How would this balance confidentiality with public trust?
- Would there be a cost to this and would it be a state mandate?

Support (As of 03/20/2026)

None listed

Opposition (As of 03/20/2026)

None listed

Staff Recommendation:

Cal Cities staff recommends the committee discuss and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors.

Committee Recommendation:**Board Action:**