
Introduced by Senator Cortese

March 3, 2025

Senate Joint Resolution No. 2—Relative to classified workers.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SJR 2, as introduced, Cortese. Classified workers’ rights.

This measure would urge President Donald J. Trump and the Congress of the United States to approve federal legislation guaranteeing specified rights to classified workers that would, among other things, empower those workers to work in a stable, safe environment and receive livable and competitive wages, as provided.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, Classified workers include paraeducators,
2 instructional assistants, those who work in clerical and
3 administrative services, transportation services, food and nutrition
4 services, custodial and maintenance services, health and pupil
5 services, technical services, and skilled trades throughout
6 elementary schools, secondary schools, and public institutions of
7 higher education; and
8 WHEREAS, The more than 3,000,000 classified workers
9 nationwide are the frontline workers who transform schools in the
10 United States from brick and mortar buildings to places of learning
11 and support for more than 49,000,000 pupils across the United
12 States; and
13 WHEREAS, Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic,
14 national school staff employment has fallen, and schools employ
15 331,000 fewer classified workers than before, leaving schools
16 without the necessary staff in almost every position; and

1 WHEREAS, A crisis in the staffing of teachers has resulted in
2 some classified workers being expected to assume the duties of
3 certificated teachers without commensurate compensation or
4 benefits; and

5 WHEREAS, Many classified workers are severely
6 undercompensated for their work and do not receive anything close
7 to a living wage, much less a competitive wage compared to the
8 existing labor market that is a family-sustaining living wage; and

9 WHEREAS, Unlike most school employees, many classified
10 workers are not full-time employees because their services have
11 been limited to reduced hours, including bus drivers and food
12 service workers; and

13 WHEREAS, Many classified workers lack access to
14 high-quality, affordable health care after being intentionally hired
15 for too few hours to receive health and retirement benefits, or they
16 otherwise are charged exorbitant employee premiums for health
17 insurance; and

18 WHEREAS, Classified workers are often the most diverse subset
19 of school employees, are more likely to have grown up in the
20 communities they serve, and are trusted school community
21 members for many pupils and parents, and, yet, the voices of
22 classified workers are not always valued in forming school policies;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, Classified workers often serve pupils facing
25 systemic barriers, but they are often excluded from professional
26 growth and development opportunities; and

27 WHEREAS, Similar to many school employees, classified
28 workers are too frequently subject to workplace violence and other
29 safety hazards, including contaminants and extreme temperatures;
30 and

31 WHEREAS, Classified workers deserve real solutions that would
32 empower them to work in a stable, safe environment, have
33 multiyear job security, receive livable and competitive wages,
34 access to sufficient hours, and fair compensation for their work,
35 and have a voice on the job and meaningful input in school policy;
36 and

37 WHEREAS, Respecting classified workers remains essential
38 to creating and maintaining safe and supportive school
39 environments that are conducive to pupils learning and thriving;
40 and

1 WHEREAS, It is important to recognize the rights, respect, and
2 dignity that classified workers deserve as they continue to care for
3 and educate the next generation; now, therefore, be it

4 *Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of*
5 *California, jointly,* That classified workers should be compensated
6 at a rate that is a livable, competitive wage, and they should have
7 access to high-quality, affordable health care and health care
8 benefits at a de minimus personal cost; and be it further

9 *Resolved,* That classified workers should be entitled to 16 weeks
10 of paid family and medical leave; and be it further

11 *Resolved,* That classified workers should have paid leave for all
12 planned and unforeseen school closures, including weather-related
13 closures, professional development days, and other short-term
14 closures; and be it further

15 *Resolved,* That classified workers should have access to
16 meaningful and free or affordable professional growth and
17 development opportunities during regular, paid working hours that
18 provide a path to career advancement; and be it further

19 *Resolved,* That classified workers should be given sufficient
20 resources and supplies to enable them to do their jobs effectively
21 and efficiently, including up-to-date technology; and be it further

22 *Resolved,* That classified workers should have access to training
23 and appropriate personal protective equipment; and be it further

24 *Resolved,* That classified workers should have representation
25 in organizations that determine policies that may affect the working
26 conditions of classified workers; and be it further

27 *Resolved,* That classified workers should receive notification
28 and the opportunity to provide significant input about the
29 implementation of electronic monitoring, data, algorithms, and
30 artificial intelligence technology in their workplaces and should
31 receive high-quality, professional training as new technologies are
32 introduced; and be it further

33 *Resolved,* That classified workers should have adequate notice
34 and opportunity to participate, when appropriate, in individualized
35 education program meetings, behavior intervention team meetings,
36 and other similar meetings relating to the pupils the classified
37 workers support, to the extent permitted by law; and be it further

38 *Resolved,* That classified workers should experience a safe and
39 healthy working environment, free from recognized hazards that

1 cause, or are likely to cause, death or serious physical harm; and
2 be it further

3 *Resolved*, That classified workers should experience appropriate
4 staffing levels to ensure that pupils have adequate support and that
5 classified workers can complete their jobs effectively, efficiently,
6 and safely; and be it further

7 *Resolved*, That classified workers should receive adequate
8 notification regarding the duration of their employment; and be it
9 further

10 *Resolved*, That classified workers should have employment
11 contracts that include a provision for automatic renewal of the
12 contract at the expiration of the contract, rather than the automatic
13 termination of the contract at expiration, and a provision for
14 termination of employment for just cause, rather than termination
15 of employment at will; and be it further

16 *Resolved*, That classified workers should have a process for
17 reporting workplace issues and concerns to their employer in a
18 manner that protects classified workers, and other employees, from
19 retaliation; and be it further

20 *Resolved*, That in recognition of the importance of collective
21 bargaining in maintaining good working conditions, employers of
22 classified workers should engage in good faith negotiations, strive
23 to reach timely and just contracts that fairly compensate and protect
24 classified workers, prevent scabs from replacing classified workers
25 engaged in a strike, and refrain from locking out classified workers;
26 and be it further

27 *Resolved*, That the Legislature urges President Donald J. Trump
28 and the Congress of the United States to approve federal legislation
29 guaranteeing these rights to classified workers; and be it further

30 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
31 this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
32 States, to the Speaker of the United States House of
33 Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the United States Senate,
34 to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress
35 of the United States, to the Governor, to the Attorney General, and
36 to the author for appropriate distribution.