

CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES BILL ANALYSIS

BILL NUMBER: AB 667

VERSION: AMENDED APRIL 1, 2025

AUTHOR: SOLACHE

SPONSOR: CALIFORNIA IMMIGRANT POLICY CENTER

STAFF RECOMMENDED POSITION: WATCH

SUBJECT: PROFESSIONS AND VOCATIONS: LICENSE EXAMINATIONS: INTERPRETERS

Summary: This bill would require boards under the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) to permit an exam interpreter for applicants who cannot read, speak, or write in English.

Existing Law:

- 1) Requires applicants for licensure as a marriage and family therapist, clinical social worker, and professional clinical counselor to pass a California law and ethics exam and a clinical exam. (Business and Professions Code (BPC) §§4980.397, 4992.05, 4999.53)
- 2) Requires applicants for licensure as an educational psychologist to pass a written exam (BPC §4989.20, 4989.22)
- 3) Permits the Board to grant additional exam time at time and a half (1.5 time) to an applicant who speaks English as a second language if they meet one of the following criteria (California Code of Regulation (CCR) Title 16, §1805.2):
 - Have a test score of 85 or below on the Test of English as a Foreign Language Internet Based Test (TOEFL-iBT), taken within the past 2 years;
 - Have a documented ESL allowance from the qualifying master's degree program; or
 - Have documentation from the qualifying master's degree program that at least half the coursework was presented in a language other than English.

This Bill:

- 1) Beginning July 1, 2026, requires DCA boards to permit an applicant who cannot read, speak, or write in English to use an interpreter to interpret the written and oral portions of a state-administered or contracted licensing exam to their preferred language. (BPC §41(b)(1))

- 2)** Defines an “interpreter” as someone who meets all the following requirements (BPC §41(a)(2)):
 - a)** Is fluent in English and the applicant’s preferred language;
 - b)** Has not acted as an interpreter for the exam within the year preceding the exam date;
 - c)** Is not licensed and does not hold the license for which the applicant is taking the exam;
 - d)** Is not a current or former student in an educational program, or in an apprenticeship or training program, for the license the applicant is taking the exam for; and
 - e)** Is not a current or former owner or employee of a school for the license the applicant is taking the exam for.
- 3)** Prohibits an interpreter from assisting with any section of an exam that is explicitly intended to test the applicant’s English language skills. (BPC §41(b)(1)(A))
- 4)** Prohibits use of an interpreter if the exam is already offered in the applicant’s preferred language. (BPC §41(b)(1)(B))
- 5)** Prohibits a board from charging a fee, penalty, or surcharge to an applicant for the use of an interpreter. (BPC §41(b)(1)(C))
- 6)** Would require DCA boards, beginning July 1, 2026, to post on their websites in English, Spanish, Farsi, Hindi, Chinese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Arabic that the use of an exam interpreter is permitted if an exam is not offered in one’s preferred language. (BPC §41(b)(2))
- 7)** Requires DCA boards, beginning July 1, 2026, to ask applicants to identify their preferred written, spoken, and signed languages on the license application. (BPC §41(b)(3))
- 8)** Requires DCA boards, beginning July 1, 2027, to conduct an annual review of applicants’ language preferences collected from the license applications. (BPC §41(c))
- 9)** Requires DCA boards to report to the Senate and Assembly Business and Professions Committees annually beginning January 1, 2029 on the collected language preference data. This requirement sunsets on January 1, 2033. (BPC §41(d))

- 10) Provides similar provisions for those seeking certification as a certified nurse assistant or a home health aide under the State Department of Public Health. (Health and Safety Code (HSC) §§1337.25, 1736.3)

Comment:

- 1) **Author's Intent.** The author is seeking to provide more equitable access and opportunities to individuals who primarily speak another language. In their fact sheet for the bill, they state the following:

“Of the 200 professional license examinations in California, only about 20 are offered in non-English languages. This is partly due to the lack of standardized language access policies across licensing regulatory bodies. Individuals from abroad or who have LEP can be at a disadvantage when trying to pass an examination despite the fact that they have the skills and energy to do the job. This creates barriers to economic inclusion for immigrant and refugee communities who are unable to receive a license to practice in their chosen occupation.”

- 2) **Contractors State License Board.** The Contractor's State License Board (CSLB) allows translators upon request and approval for its exams, as its regulations already provide this authority. (16 CCR §840). That board's [exam FAQs](#) contain a specific section on translator testing. Key provisions include the following:

- CSLB permits an applicant to bring a translator of their choosing to read the exam for them if a translated exam is not available.
- The translator must be approved in advance by the board via a translator request form (the request process takes 4-6 weeks).
- The translator must provide a valid government issued ID at the time of the exam.
- The exam administer monitors the conversations between translators and exam candidates to ensure the translator is not assisting with the exam in any way.
- Translators are not allowed to translate again for one year from the date they translated.

Per CSLB staff, they have had the translator allowance in place since at least 1990. Additionally, that board's 10 most taken exams have been translated into a Spanish written version. (Their staff gave a rough estimate of a cost of \$2,500 per exam to translate, and their exam versions change every 5 years.) Interpreters are not allowed if there is already a written translated version available in the language requested.

CSLB does not pay for translators. However, exams taken with a translator must have a private room at the test site, as well as a proctor present, and the board does pay for those costs. They estimate the cost for the room and proctor is approximately \$67 for a 4-hour exam. They note that they average approximately 40 translated exams per month (roughly a \$2,700 monthly cost).

CSLB staff states that cheating is very rare, with no incidents of translator related cheating this year. There was one translator related cheating incident in 2024. Part of the reason CSLB began translating their 10 most common exams in written form was to reduce use of translators and thus associated security concerns. Use of the translated written exams also reduced some of the wait time backlog, as it takes time for staff to approve translator requests, and some exam sites have limited private rooms or do not have them at all.

- 3) **Expected Volume of Requests.** Board staff estimates that it gets approximately 80 requests for ESL accommodations each year. Therefore, it would be reasonable to estimate that these candidates might also request an interpreter.
- 4) **Security Concerns.** Permitting an applicant to bring an interpreter of their choosing could raise security concerns and extra monitoring would be needed to prevent subversion of the exam. The bill prevents an interpreter from interpreting the exam again for one year for exam security purposes.
- 5) **Qualifying Criteria Not Specified.** The bill does not currently specify any criteria an applicant must meet to request an interpreter; they would simply need to request the use of an interpreter due to not being able to read, speak, or write in English. Self-attestation is likely sufficient in this case; however, if the Board desires additional qualifying criteria, it may wish to request this.
- 6) **Clarify Terminology.** Section 41(b)(1) permits an applicant to use an interpreter to interpret a “state administered or contracted” license exam to their preferred language. The term “state administered or contracted” license exam should be clarified to specify whether it refers solely to board-administered exams or if it also intended to include national exams.
- 7) **Applicability to National Exams.** As currently written, it appears that the bill would also apply to national exams that the Board utilizes. Staff is in the process of communicating with the national exam agencies to determine if there are any logistical concerns.
- 8) **Fiscal Impact.** If approximately 80 applicants per year utilize an interpreter, and if the Board’s cost for a private room and proctor is like CSLB’s reported cost (\$67 per applicant), the Board can expect a fiscal impact of approximately \$5,400 per year.

Additionally, the Board may need to create a staff position to track and approve interpreters (including reviewing qualifications and answering questions), depending on the volume of the requests received.

There would also be costs to update the Breeze system in order to track preferred language data collected via license applications.

9) Staff Recommended Position. Staff recommends a “watch” position at this time.

10) Support and Opposition

Support:

- California Immigrant Policy Center (Sponsor)

Opposition:

- None at this time.

11) History

04/02/25	Re-referred to Com. on B. & P.
04/01/25	From committee chair, with author's amendments: Amend, and re-refer to Com. on B. & P. Read second time and amended.
03/03/25	Referred to Coms. on B. & P. and Health.
02/15/25	From printer. May be heard in committee March 17.
02/14/25	Read first time. To print.

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ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 667

Introduced by Assembly Member Solache

February 14, 2025

An act to add Section 41 to the Business and Professions Code, and to add Sections 1337.25 and 1736.3 to the Health and Safety Code, relating to professions and vocations.

legislative counsel's digest

AB 667, as amended, Solache. Professions and vocations: license examinations: interpreters.

Existing law establishes the Department of Consumer Affairs, which is composed of various boards that license and regulate various professions. Existing law provides for the certification and regulation of *certified* nurse assistants and home health ~~aids~~ *aides* by the State Department of Public Health.

This bill would, beginning July 1, 2026, require the State Department of Public Health and boards under the jurisdiction of the Department of Consumer Affairs to permit an applicant who cannot read, speak, or write in English to use an ~~interpreter, at no cost to the applicant,~~ *interpreter* to interpret the English ~~verbal~~ *written* and oral portions of the license or certification examination, as applicable, if the applicant meets all other requirements for ~~licensure.~~ *licensure, as specified.*

This bill would require an interpreter to satisfy specified requirements, including not having the license for which the applicant is taking the examination. The bill would also require those boards and the State Department of Public Health to post on their internet websites that an applicant may use an interpreter if they cannot read, speak, or write in

~~English and if English, the examination is not offered in their preferred language, and they meet all other requirements for licensure or certification.~~

This bill would require those boards and the State Department of Public Health to include in their licensure or certification applications a section that asks the applicant to identify their preferred language and, beginning July 1, 2027, to conduct an annual review of the language preferences of applicants. The bill would require the State Department of Public Health and those boards, beginning July 1, ~~2029~~ 2029, and until January 1, 2033, to annually report to specified committees of the Legislature on language preference data.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 41 is added to the Business and
2 Professions Code, to read:
3 41. (a) For purposes of this section:
4 (1) “Board” means any board under the jurisdiction of the
5 Department of Consumer Affairs, as specified in Section 101.
6 (2) “Interpreter” means an individual who satisfies all of the
7 following conditions:
8 (A) Is fluent in English and in the ~~preferred language of the~~
9 ~~applicant.~~ *applicant’s preferred language.*
10 (B) Has not acted as an interpreter for the examination within
11 the year preceding the ~~date of the examination.~~ *examination date.*
12 (C) Is not licensed and has not been issued the license for which
13 the applicant is taking the examination.
14 (D) Is not a current or former student in an educational program
15 for the license for which the applicant is taking the examination.
16 (E) Is not a current or former student in an apprenticeship or
17 training program for the license for which the applicant is taking
18 the examination.
19 (F) Is not a current or former owner or employee of a school
20 for the license for which the applicant is taking the examination.
21 (b) Notwithstanding any other law, beginning July 1, 2026, each
22 board shall do all of the following:
23 (1) Permit an applicant ~~who to use an interpreter, if the applicant~~
24 ~~cannot read, speak, or write in English to use an interpreter, at no~~

1 ~~cost to the applicant,~~ *English*, to interpret the English ~~verbal~~ written
2 and oral portions of a state-administered or contracted license
3 examination to their preferred language, provided the applicant
4 meets all other requirements for licensure.

5 (A) *An interpreter shall not assist the applicant with any section*
6 *of an examination that is explicitly intended to test an applicant's*
7 *English language skills.*

8 (B) *An interpreter shall not assist the applicant if an examination*
9 *is offered in the applicant's preferred language.*

10 (C) *The board shall not charge an applicant a fee, penalty, or*
11 *surcharge for the applicant's use of an interpreter.*

12 (2) Post on the board's internet website that an applicant may
13 use an interpreter to interpret a license examination if the applicant
14 cannot read, speak, or write in ~~English,~~ *English and the*
15 *examination is not offered in their preferred language*, provided
16 the applicant meets all other competency requirements for
17 licensure. This notice shall be posted in English, Spanish, Farsi,
18 Hindi, Chinese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese,
19 Tagalog, and Arabic.

20 (3) Include an additional section in a license application that
21 asks an applicant to identify their preferred written, spoken, and
22 signed languages.

23 (c) Beginning July 1, 2027, each board shall conduct an annual
24 review of ~~the language preferences of applicants for licensure that~~
25 *is applicants' language preferences that are* collected from license
26 applications.

27 (d) (1) Beginning January 1, 2029, each board shall annually
28 report to the Senate Business, Professions, and Economic
29 Development and the Assembly Business and Professions
30 Committees on language preference data collected from license
31 applications.

32 (2) The report shall be submitted in compliance with Section
33 9795 of the Government Code.

34 (3) Pursuant to Section 10231.5 of the Government Code, this
35 subdivision shall become inoperative on January 1, 2033.

36 SEC. 2. Section 1337.25 is added to the Health and Safety
37 Code, immediately following Section 1337.2, to read:

38 1337.25. (a) For purposes of this section, "interpreter" means
39 an individual who satisfies all of the following conditions:

1 (1) Is fluent in English and in the ~~preferred language of the~~
2 ~~applicant.~~ *applicant's preferred language.*

3 (2) Has not acted as an interpreter for an examination for
4 certification as a *certified* nurse assistant within the year preceding
5 ~~the date of the examination.~~ *examination date.*

6 (3) Is not a certified nurse assistant and has not held a ~~certificate~~
7 ~~as a nurse assistant in the state.~~ *state certified nurse assistant*
8 *certificate.*

9 (4) Is not a current or former student in an educational program
10 for certification as a *certified* nurse assistant.

11 (5) Is not a current or former student in a certified nurse assistant
12 apprenticeship or training program.

13 (6) Is not a current or former owner or employee of a school
14 for certification as a *certified* nurse assistant.

15 (b) Notwithstanding any other law, beginning July 1, 2026, the
16 department shall do all of the following:

17 (1) Permit an applicant ~~who to use an interpreter, if the applicant~~
18 ~~cannot read, speak, or write in English to use an interpreter, at no~~
19 ~~cost to the applicant,~~ *English, to interpret the English-verbal written*
20 *and oral portions of a state-administered or contracted certified*
21 *nurse assistant examination to their preferred language, provided*
22 *the applicant meets all other requirements for certification.*

23 (A) *An interpreter shall not assist the applicant with any section*
24 *of an examination that is explicitly intended to test an applicant's*
25 *English language skills.*

26 (B) *An interpreter shall not assist the applicant if an examination*
27 *is offered in the applicant's preferred language.*

28 (C) *The board shall not charge an applicant a fee, penalty, or*
29 *surcharge for the applicant's use of an interpreter.*

30 (2) Post on the department's internet website that an applicant
31 may use an interpreter to interpret the certified nurse assistant
32 examination if the applicant cannot read, speak, or write in ~~English,~~
33 *English and the examination is not offered in their preferred*
34 *language, provided the applicant meets all other competency*
35 *requirements for certification. This notice shall be posted in*
36 *English, Spanish, Farsi, Hindi, Chinese, Cantonese, Mandarin,*
37 *Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Arabic.*

38 (3) Include an additional section in the certified nurse assistant
39 application that asks an applicant to identify their preferred written,
40 spoken, and signed languages.

1 (c) Beginning July 1, 2027, the department shall conduct an
2 annual review of ~~the language preferences of applicants for nurse~~
3 ~~assistant certification that is~~ *applicants' language preferences*
4 collected from applications.

5 (d) (1) Beginning January 1, 2029, the department shall annually
6 report to the Senate and Assembly Health Committees on language
7 preference data collected from *certified* nurse assistant certification
8 applications.

9 (2) The report shall be submitted in compliance with Section
10 9795 of the Government Code.

11 (3) Pursuant to Section 10231.5 of the Government Code, this
12 subdivision shall become inoperative on January 1, 2033.

13 SEC. 3. Section 1736.3 is added to the Health and Safety Code,
14 to read:

15 1736.3. (a) For purposes of this section, "interpreter" means
16 an individual who satisfies all of the following conditions:

17 (1) Is fluent in English and in ~~the preferred language of the~~
18 ~~applicant.~~ *applicant's preferred language.*

19 (2) Has not acted as an interpreter for an examination for
20 certification as a home health aid within the year preceding the
21 ~~date of the examination.~~ *examination date.*

22 (3) Is not a certified home health aid and has not held a
23 certificate as a *certified* home health ~~aid~~ *aide* in the state.

24 (4) Is not a current or former student in an educational program
25 for certification as a ~~nurse assistant.~~ *certified home health aide.*

26 (5) Is not a current or former student in a certified home health
27 ~~aid~~ *aide* apprenticeship program.

28 (6) Is not a current or former owner or employee of a school
29 for certification as a ~~nurse assistant.~~ *certified home health aide.*

30 (b) Notwithstanding any other law, beginning July 1, 2026, the
31 department shall do all of the following:

32 (1) Permit an applicant ~~who~~ *to use an interpreter if the applicant*
33 ~~cannot read, speak, or write in English to use an interpreter, at no~~
34 ~~cost to the applicant, English,~~ *to interpret the English-verbal written*
35 *and oral portions of the certified home health-aid aide examination*
36 *to their preferred language, provided the applicant meets all other*
37 *requirements for certification.*

38 (A) *An interpreter shall not assist the applicant with any section*
39 *of an examination that is explicitly intended to test an applicant's*
40 *English language skills.*

1 (B) *An interpreter shall not assist the applicant if an examination*
2 *is offered in the applicant's preferred language.*

3 (C) *The board shall not charge an applicant a fee, penalty, or*
4 *surcharge for the applicant's use of an interpreter.*

5 (2) Post on the department's internet website that an applicant
6 may use an interpreter to interpret the certified home health aid
7 examination if the applicant cannot read, speak, or write in ~~English,~~
8 *English and the examination is not offered in their preferred*
9 *language*, provided the applicant meets all other competency
10 requirements for certification. This notice shall be posted in
11 English, Spanish, Farsi, Hindi, Chinese, Cantonese, Mandarin,
12 Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Arabic.

13 (3) Include an additional section in the certified home health
14 aid application that asks an applicant to identify their preferred
15 written, spoken, and signed languages.

16 (c) Beginning July 1, 2027, the department shall conduct an
17 annual review of ~~the language preferences of applicants for home~~
18 ~~health aid certification that is~~ *applicants' language preferences*
19 collected from applications.

20 (d) (1) Beginning on January 1, 2029, the department shall
21 annually report to the Senate and Assembly Health Committees
22 on language preference data collected from *certified* home health
23 ~~aid~~ *aide* certification applications.

24 (2) The report shall be submitted in compliance with Section
25 9795 of the Government Code.

26 (3) Pursuant to Section 10231.5 of the Government Code, this
27 subdivision shall become inoperative on January 1, 2033.

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