

**State Audit Request: Fifty Percent
Law Joint Legislative Audit Committee
Hearing Date: June 26, 2023**

Request: The Community College League of California urges the Joint Legislative Audit Committee to either pull or reject the requested audit by Assembly Member Freddie Rodriguez on the Fifty Percent Law in the California Community Colleges scheduled June 26.

Process: Audit requests brought to JLAC are either approved or denied at a single hearing. JLAC is comprised of seven assembly members and seven senators, and, unlike most committees which require a simple majority for passage, it mandates a simple majority from the representatives of each legislative house, meaning four assemblymembers and four senators must vote to approve an audit request for it to proceed to the State Auditor.

Background: Enacted in 1961, the Fifty Percent Law was intended to prevent administrative costs from encroaching on direct classroom instruction. At the time of its enactment, California's then "junior colleges" were part of the K-12 system and collective bargaining was not yet part of the college landscape. Today neither of the other public higher education segments are subject to the law.

It is eminently clear from an abundance of national and state-level evidence that the needs of students at California Community Colleges have changed significantly since 1961. Most recently, but prior to the pandemic which severely impacted many low-income and families of color, our colleges adopted more robust wrap-around services, including the provision of basic needs to students, and a case management approach to student support and success.

While the League welcomes a concerted policy analysis on the continuing application and value of the Fifty Percent Law, particularly as it either advances or hinders attainment of the Vision for Success and Governor's Roadmap, we do not believe that this particular audit request, as currently crafted, will assist policymakers with their deliberations on how community colleges can best serve students achieve their educational and career goals.

Talking points provided on page 2.

Talking Points on State Audit Request (Rodriguez)

Fifty Percent Law

Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLAC)

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The League encourages constituents of the legislators on the Joint Legislative Audit Committee (see below) to connect with their representatives prior to June 26 using the following points as a guide.

1) Districts are highly regulated and subject to multiple levels of compliance. In addition to local audits, the Chancellor's Office employs a robust regulatory structure. While the League is not opposed to examining compliance, this audit should not add to the costs of what districts are currently doing.

2) An examination of the Fifty Percent Law should focus on the significant changes in expectations of community colleges since 1961, particularly:

a) Does the law help or hinder colleges in the hiring of non-instructional faculty, particularly counselors?

b) Does the law help or hinder colleges in their ability to expand student support services, including, but not limited to, supplemental funding for mental health, basic needs, and other wrap-around services?

c) Does the law align with or contradict the principles underlying the Student Success Funding Formula?

d) Does the law help or hinder the colleges in their ability to achieve the goals outlined in the Vision for Success and Roadmap for California Community Colleges?

e) Does the law properly recognize the role of release time for instructional faculty who perform essential functions under shared governance?

3) How much does it cost districts to comply with this law and is there a direct correlation between this expenditure and student success?

4) Why are California Community Colleges the only segment of public higher education subject to this law?

JLAC Composition:

State

Assembly: David Alvarez, Chair (D-Chula Vista); Tasha Boerner (D-Carlsbad), Josh Hoover (R-Folsom), Jim Patterson (R-Fresno), Blanca Rubio (D-West Covina), Avelino Valencia (D-Anaheim), Jim Wood (D-Santa Rosa)

Senate: Catherine Blakespear (Vice Chair) (D-Encinitas), Dave Cortese (D-Campbell), Susan Talamantes Eggman (D-Stockton), Lena Gonzalez (D-Long Beach), John Laird (D-Santa Cruz), Kelly Seyarto (R-Corona), Scott Wilk (R-Santa Clarita)

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