

# TOP CALIFORNIA WORKPLACE BILLS TO WATCH IN 2026

Insights  
Mar 6, 2026

## Top California Workplace Bills to Watch in 2026

California employers can now get a first look at the state's key workplace-related legislative proposals in 2026. The state's deadline for introducing new legislation in the current session was February 20, and lawmakers introduced nearly 1,800 bills – including many that cover significant labor and employment issues you'll want to know about. Catch a teaser below and [register](#) for our upcoming [California Legislative Preview 2026](#) webinar on March 13 to get the full scoop.

### Table of Contents

- [Antidiscrimination Protections](#)
- [Artificial Intelligence + Workplace Surveillance](#)
- [Employee Leaves and Accommodations](#)
- [Immigration](#)
- [Privacy and Cyber](#)
- [Wage and Hour](#)
- [Workplace Safety](#)

### Antidiscrimination Protections

- **Expansion of Ban-the-Box Requirements (AB 2095).** In addition to [existing requirements under California's Fair](#)

## Related People



**Benjamin M. Ebbink**

Partner

[916.210.0400](tel:916.210.0400)

## Service Focus

[AI, Data, and Analytics](#)

[Employee Benefits and Tax](#)

[Employee Leaves and Accommodations](#)

[Employment Discrimination and Harassment](#)

[FCRA and Background Screening](#)

[Government Relations](#)

[Chance Act](#), employers would be prohibited from refusing to hire an applicant or taking other adverse action solely or in part because of the individual's conviction history, unless the employer could show, after following a specific process, that the conviction history has a direct and adverse impact on the specific duties of the desired job.

- **Menopause-Related Protections (AB 1940)**. This bill would expand sex-based discrimination prohibited by the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) to include discrimination because of medical conditions related to perimenopause, menopause, or postmenopause.

**Want more?** Last year, [Rhode Island became the first state](#) explicitly enact workplace protections for women experiencing menopausal transition. As the call for menopause-related legislation and awareness grows louder, you can learn more checking out this prior FP Insight: [The Untapped ROI of Menopause-Savvy Workplaces](#).

- **Anti-Hate Speech Training (AB 1803)**. Employers subject to FEHA would be required to include anti-hate speech as a component of existing mandated sexual harassment training and education.

## Artificial Intelligence + Workplace Surveillance

- **The "No Robo Bosses Act" Returns (SB 947)**. This bill is a revised version of legislation [vetoed by Gov. Gavin Newsom](#) last year. While changes were made to address some of Newsom's concerns, the core concept remains: employers would be prohibited from using "automated decision systems" as the sole basis for making consequential employment decisions about current employees, specifically decisions to discharge or discipline workers. Learn more [here](#) (FP Insight).

**Note on Existing Landscape:** If you use AI tools to make or facilitate the making of hiring, firing, and other employment decisions, other regulations may impose notice obligations as the [CCPA regulations that kick in January 1, 2027](#)) or strongly encourage conducting bias audits of such AI tools ([such as California Civil Rights Department regulations that took effect October 1](#)).

[Immigration](#)

[Privacy and Cyber](#)

[Reductions in Force \(RIFs\)](#)

[Wage and Hour](#)

[Workplace Safety](#)

---

## Industry Focus

[Agriculture](#)

---

## Resource Hubs

[AI Governance Hub](#)

---

## Related Offices

[Irvine](#)

[Los Angeles](#)

[Sacramento](#)

[San Diego](#)

[San Francisco](#)

[Silicon Valley](#)

[Woodland Hills](#)

- **90-Day Notice for AI-Driven Mass Layoffs (SB 951)**. As a companion measure to SB 947, this bill focuses on mass layoff events caused by automation or AI implementation and would create enhanced Cal-WARN notice requirements specifically for AI-driven layoffs. Learn more [here](#) (FP Insight).
- **Disclosure and Transparency About Use of AI Tools (AB 1898)**. Employers using artificial intelligence tools to make employment-related decisions or surveil the workplace would be required to satisfy strict notice obligations before using such tool and to maintain an updated list of all workplace AI tools in use that is distributed to workers annually.
- **Regulation of Workplace Surveillance Tools and Use of Worker Data (AB 1883)**. Employers would be prohibited from using certain workplace surveillance tools that perform certain functions or to infer a worker's protected status under FEHA – and could face a penalty of up to \$500 per employee for each violation.

### Employee Leaves and Accommodations

- **Expanded Bereavement Leave (SB 1149)**. Covered employees would be entitled to bereavement leave of up to five days upon the death of a “designated person” – meaning any blood relative or any individual whose association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship. Existing law requires such leave upon the death of an employee's spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, or domestic partner.

### Immigration

- **Broader Ban on Unfair Immigration-Related Practices (AB 2495)**. State law already prohibits employers from engaging in unfair immigration-related practices, and this bill would also ban employers from engaging in coercion against any person by engaging in such practices. It would also specify a fine of up to \$10,000 per employee for each violation.

### Privacy and Cyber

- **Incentives for Consumer Privacy Whistleblowers (AB 2021)**. Businesses subject to the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) should be aware of this proposal to

establish an incentive program that would reward whistleblowers who report CCPA violations.

- **Ban on Selling Sensitive Personal Information ([AB 1542](#)).** The CCPA would be expanded to prohibit businesses, service providers, or contractors from selling or sharing sensitive personal information to a third party.

## Wage and Hour

- **California's Version of No Tax on Tips or Overtime ([AB 1550](#) and [SB 984](#)).** A bill in the State Assembly would, for California income tax purposes, mirror the federal tax deductions for workers that rolled out last year relating to qualified tips and qualified overtime compensation. (We previously covered why the federal "No Tax on Overtime" rules [create challenges for California employers and leave gaps for workers earning OT in the state](#)). A bill in the State Senate would do the same but only with regard to the [federal tax deduction available for qualified tips](#). Both bills would make the new state deductions available only for tax years beginning in 2026 and before 2029.
- **Major Wage Hike in Agriculture Industry ([AB 2646](#)).** This bill would raise the hourly minimum wage to \$19.75 for certain agricultural employees starting in 2027, subject to annual cost-of-living adjustments thereafter. [Learn more in this prior FP Insight](#). This proposal is part of a larger trend in California, which has already enacted industry-specific minimum wages for the [fast-food industry](#) and [certain healthcare employees](#).
- **Employer Tax Credit for Agricultural OT Pay ([SB 921](#)).** Employers would be allowed to claim a tax credit in an amount equal to the amount of overtime wages paid during a quarter to specified agricultural employees covered by a certain wage order.

## Workplace Safety

- **Easier Access to Workplace Violence Restraining Orders ([AB 1961](#)).** If a credible threat of violence were directed at the employer's workplace or its employees generally, the employer would be allowed to seek a workplace violence restraining order on behalf of "a reasonably identifiable group or class of employees" – without the need to name any individual employee as a protected party.

**Want to Learn More? Register [here](#) to attend our [California Legislative Preview 2026](#), a complimentary webinar that will give you a deeper dive and an insider look into these key proposed bills.**

## **Conclusion**

We will continue to monitor each of these bills to see if they are ultimately passed and approved or vetoed by Governor Newsom, and we'll provide further analysis and compliance assistance for any bills that are enacted. Make sure you are subscribed to [Fisher Phillips' Insight System](#) to receive the latest developments straight to your inbox. In the meantime, if you have any questions, contact your Fisher Phillips attorney, the author of this Insight, or any attorney in our [California offices](#).