

Newsom vetoes bill that would have extended substitute teaching time

The proposal, which comes amid a teacher shortage, was opposed by the California Teachers Association.



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Gov. Newsom vetoed a bill by Assemblymember Avelino Valencia that would have allowed substitute teachers to spend more time in a single classroom. | Rich Pedroncelli for POLITICO

Gov. Gavin Newsom vetoed a bill on Monday that would have doubled the number of days that a substitute teacher can work in a particular classroom amid pushback from the California Teachers Association and disability rights advocates.

What happened: In [a veto message](#), Newsom said that because the proposal does not require school districts to offer mentorship, training and support to substitute teachers, it would "allow individuals to serve our highest-need students for as much as a third of the school year without minimally required training or mentorship." The measure passed the Assembly 75-0 and Senate 38-1.

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The bill's author, Democratic Assemblymember Avelino Valencia, had argued the measure would provide better continuity for students amid the "unprecedented" teacher shortage facing the state. In 2022, the number of new teachers who completed traditional training programs in California was half the total in 2004, [according to a report](#) by the Learning Policy Institute. The report also found that California is facing a persistent shortfall in teachers, with students of color and those from low-income backgrounds being disproportionately impacted.

In his message, Newsom encouraged Valencia to introduce future legislation that requires more training and support for long-term substitute teachers. He also asked the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, which opposed the bill, to work on supporting "continuity of instruction" when schools are short-staffed.

In vetoing the bill, Newsom went against school boards, administrators and superintendents, who had supported it. The California Association of School Business Officials [framed the bill](#) as a "practical, urgent solution to ensure our students experience continuity and stability in their classrooms, especially in high-need areas like special education and rural schools" while providing flexibility for districts.

Derick Lennox, senior director of government relations and legal affairs for the California County Superintendents, said in response to the veto that the bill was "a tangible and immediate solution to provide students with continuity in the classroom while the state rebuilds its teacher workforce."

"School leaders don't have the luxury of wishing away California's well-documented teacher shortage," Lennox said.

Key context: CTA, along with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund, Disability Rights California and Public Advocates, blasted the bill in [a joint letter to Newsom](#) as one that lacks the “basic foundation to ensure continuity of education for California’s learners and shifts the burden of workforce challenges onto students.”

The groups argued the bill would allow schools to rely too heavily on substitute teachers, who often do not have as much training or experience as fully credentialed teachers — a concession that “education quality is negotiable” if there is a teacher shortage. The disability rights groups contended the bill would allow teachers who are untrained in recognizing students with disabilities to instruct special education students. And Public Advocates, a civil rights law firm that won a landmark case 25 years ago tightening standards and accountability in California schools, said that it was “deeply concerned that AB 1224 undermines teacher quality standards at the expense of California's most vulnerable students.”

"We think there is enough current flexibility in the laws for districts to meet their needs," said John Affeldt, managing attorney at Public Advocates. "They just don't want to work hard enough to make sure that they've got their classrooms properly staffed."