

BILL ANALYSIS

AB 1670

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Date of Hearing: May 26, 1999

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
Carole Migden, Chairwoman

AB 1670 (Judiciary) - As Amended: May 6, 1999

Policy Committee: JudiciaryVote:9-3

Urgency: Yes State Mandated Local
Program:NoReimbursable:SUMMARY :

This bill amends various Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) and other civil rights statutes to strengthen discrimination protections and to clarify existing law, including:

- 1) Increasing the amount of damages and administrative fines that the Fair Employment and Housing Administration may award in discrimination cases from \$50,000 to \$150,000.
- 2) Extending harassment protections under the FEHA to contract workers.
- 3) Requiring employers to provide reasonable accommodations to pregnant employees and clarifying that genetic testing of employees is prohibited.

FISCAL EFFECT :

Potential minor cost to the Department of Fair Employment and Housing to the extent that the bill's provisions lead to increased workload for the department.

COMMENTS :

- 1) Purpose . This bill is intended to strengthen and clarify a series of key civil rights protections contained in FEHA and other civil rights statutes. The proposed changes continue to incorporate recommendations made by a broad coalition of the state's housing, labor, disability, civil rights, and employment law experts and organizations. Many of the proposals are taken from existing federal law or regulations in the areas of housing and employment, and many have already

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been approved by the Legislature in prior sessions.

- 2) Prior Legislation . In 1998, AB 310 (Kuehl), which contained many of the provisions of this bill, was vetoed by Governor Wilson due to the concerns about the bill's harassment protections for contract workers.
- 3) Opposition . The Civil Justice Association of California (formerly the Association for California Tort Reform) opposes the bill due to concerns that it will expand employer liability in the civil justice system.

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