

Assembly Bill 347

Compassionate Learning Advancement for Science Students (CLASS) Act Assemblymember Ash Kalra

SUMMARY

Assembly Bill (AB) 347 would establish the Compassionate Learning Advancements for Science Students (CLASS) Act, which will empower students to be informed in writing about their right to opt out of animal dissection projects, as well as to receive, upon request, any information about the sourcing of the animals and chemicals used to preserve the animals. In addition, schools will be encouraged to phase out animal-based instruction and use alternative non-animal methods by 2028.

ISSUE

Despite current law allowing students to opt-out of animal dissection assignments, many students and even some teachers are not aware of this right. Additionally, some students who have tried to exercise this right have received resistance from teachers and/or peers to participate.

BACKGROUND

Learning about anatomy in schools is important in scientific pedagogy, and advancements in educational technology have expanded access to this critical scientific instruction without relying on animals. However, many schools still use animal dissection kits in classrooms.

Although California allows students to opt out of the animal dissection assignment, many are unaware of this option and feel obligated to participate in fear of this impacting their grades regardless of their deeply held ethical beliefs. Current law requires teachers to allow students to opt out of the dissection project and offer a comparable assignment. Students should be given an equal opportunity to achieve the same educational goal as their peers by receiving a comparable assignment and assessment as an alternative to animal dissection.

CURRENT LAW

Education Code Chapter 2.3, section 32255-32255.6 gives students the right to opt out of dissection assignments and guarantees that they shall not be discriminated against in doing so.

SOLUTION

AB 347, the CLASS Act, will require teachers to provide students with a written notice to inform students of their right to opt out of animal dissection projects, and to receive, upon request, any information provided to the teacher by the vender regarding where the animals were sourced from and what chemicals they will be exposed to when participating in the assignment.

The bill requires the Department of Education to produce a template form by November 1, 2026, which teachers may use to provide the written notice pursuant to the bill, as well as adds that the Uniform Complaint Procedures in section 33315 shall apply to violations of a student's right to refrain from animal dissection.

Lastly, the bill encourages schools to phase out animal dissection to be more cost-effective and provide a more humane way to reach the same scientific educational outcome while affording students the same educational benefits.

SPONSORS

Social Compassion in Legislation (SCIL)
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)

CONTACT

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