

Submitter: Susan Anderson
On Behalf Of: OCCA
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB478

I write this evening to oppose SB 478. While I fully support student involvement in college activities, this bill creates inequity and some potential legal issues as written as well as duplicates existing practice. Community College Board Members already have public emails, for instance. We also have students seated as Ex-Officio members of the board and we welcome their voices. They can also attend all public board meetings and weigh in during public input. The current bill requires students serving as voting board members be full-time students. This negates the majority of community college students. More importantly, the number of students voting for the seat would be significantly less than the number of voters participating in a board election. No other elected governing body is required to allow voting members who were not elected by the voters in the district. Would this include out-of-state or foreign students? This could potentially allow unregistered, non-citizens to be elected to the board which is not allowed for district residents. There is nothing stopping students enrolled in college from running for a regular board seat as long as they meet the requirements to run. (I would welcome that.)

Adding an 8th member to the board results in an even number making tie votes a real possibility. This could interrupt the operation of the college.

Initially, all associations joined by schools or school employees would have to be voted on by the board. As the bill has been amended, the full board would need to vote on joining OCCA or ACCT. Why? This is not required by any other elected governing body and why were these two groups singled out? K-12 boards do not have to vote to join OSBA..... This doesn't pass the smell test. Boards already have the authority to establish such a requirement. Why is the local decision-making authority being removed from community colleges?

Much of this bill doesn't make sense, perhaps because community college reps were not included in any development or discussion of this bill even though it directly affects us. As currently written, this bill is unacceptable and seems unnecessary. (I am not sure what problem it is trying to correct....) Therefore, I encourage you to vote "no" on SB 478.

Thank you for your consideration.

Susan Anderson
SWOCC Board Vice-Chair

