



AB 662: Chula Vista University Act

Summary:

AB 662 aims to explore the creation of an intersegmental institution of higher education in Chula Vista, California. The proposed legislation calls for the establishment of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) tasked with evaluating necessary governance structures, degree offerings, funding mechanisms, and legislative changes to facilitate the development of a collaborative higher education institution that caters to the local community.

Background:

Chula Vista, the largest city in California with a population exceeding 200,000, currently lacks a public university that offers baccalaureate degree programs. This absence limits educational opportunities for the approximately 585,000 residents of South San Diego County, where obtaining a degree is critical to bridging the educational gap and enhancing access to high-quality higher education. To address these needs, the City has initiated the creation of a bi-national, multi-institutional University Innovation District on over 383 acres of city-owned land in Eastern Chula Vista. This initiative aims to foster collaboration among various educational institutions, including the University of California (UC), California State University (CSU), and California Community Colleges (CCC), to create a streamlined educational pathway that aligns with regional workforce demands.

Problem:

The lack of a public university in Chula Vista represents a significant hurdle for residents seeking higher education opportunities. Without access to baccalaureate programs, individuals in the region face limitations in their ability to pursue advanced education, which is increasingly necessary in today's job market. This educational gap not only affects individual aspirations but also impacts the overall economic and workforce development of the region.

Solution:

To address the educational deficiencies in Chula Vista, AB 662 proposes the formation of a Joint Powers Authority that would bring together the CSU, CCC, and UC, along with the City of Chula Vista, to evaluate and recommend essential governance structures, academic programs tailored to meet local workforce needs, and funding sources to support the establishment of the new institution.

Additionally, the JPA would be charged with identifying statutory barriers and suggesting legislative changes to facilitate the creation of a collaborative higher education institution. By January 1, 2027, the JPA will submit a comprehensive report with findings and recommendations to the Legislature's policy and fiscal committees, paving the way for meaningful advancements in higher education accessibility for the residents of Chula Vista and South San Diego County.

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