

ALERT

Chamber Celebrates Teichert as First 100-Year Member



The California Chamber of Commerce proudly honors **Teichert**, a distinguished leader in the construction and construction materials industries, as its first-ever 100-year member. This milestone highlights Teichert’s unwavering commitment to both its industry and the business community, showcasing the long-term value of CalChamber membership.

Founded in 1887, Teichert has played a pivotal role in shaping California’s infrastructure while maintaining a steadfast partnership with CalChamber since 1924. Through a century of collaboration, Teichert has leveraged CalChamber’s resources, advocacy, and compliance expertise to support its continued success.

“To have a company like Teichert remain a dedicated member for 100 years speaks volumes about the impact of our work,” said CalChamber President and CEO Jennifer Barrera. “This milestone reflects the strength of our advocacy, compliance solutions, and business support, which continue to provide value to California businesses of all sizes.”

In honor of this achievement, the CalChamber has produced a special [video tribute](#) celebrating Teichert’s century-long membership. The video highlights the company’s legacy and the mutual benefits of long-standing membership with the CalChamber.

As the CalChamber looks ahead, this milestone serves as a reminder of its ongoing commitment to providing essential advocacy, resources, and compliance support to businesses across California.

Proposed Privacy/Security Rules CalChamber Comments, Raises Concerns, Calls for Extended Compliance Timeline



On February 18, the California Chamber of Commerce submitted comments in

response to the California Privacy Protection Agency’s (CPPA) request for public input on draft regulations regarding automated decision-making technologies, cybersecurity audits, and privacy risk assessments.

Although the CalChamber supports the stated goal of the CPPA’s draft regu-

lations to protect consumer privacy and security while advancing innovation, the CalChamber pointed out that the draft regulations fall short of the goal and require significant revisions to avoid both overreaching the limits of the statute and detrimental consumer impacts.

Recommendations

Among its recommendations, the CalChamber urged the CPPA to implement revisions to address concerns that the draft regulations and the Standardized Regulatory Impact Assessment (SRIA):

See Proposed Privacy/Security: Page 7

CFCE Names New President Luis Quiñonez to Lead CalChamber-Affiliated Research Group



Luis A. Quiñonez

Luis A. Quiñonez has been named president of the California Foundation for Commerce and Education (CFCE), a CalChamber-affiliated nonprofit research organization that helps leaders understand the impacts of public policy on business, jobs and investment in the state.

Quiñonez, who most recently served as chief of staff to California State Senator Anna M. Caballero (D-Merced), assumed the CFCE position on February 24. He succeeds Loren Kaye, who served as CFCE president since 2006. Kaye retired at the end of 2024.

“Luis brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to this role,” said CalChamber President and CEO Jennifer Barrera. “Luis is a demonstrated leader who will work to ensure that lawmakers and the public understand the significant contributions private enterprise makes to our economy and the adverse impact that costly, unbalanced policies have on our competitiveness.”

“The California business community is grateful that Luis is stepping into this

See Luis Quiñonez: Page 3

Inside

Potential Changes to Workplace Violence Prevention Standards: Page 3

*Labor Law Corner***Victims' Leave Law Creates New Obligations, Expands Others**

Erika Barbara
Senior Employment
Law Counsel

I am updating our employee handbook and I am confused about the changes to California's victims' leave law — what's new for 2025?

Although victim's leave is not new for California employers, **AB 2499** did revise leave requirements effective Janu-

ary 1, 2025, including by broadening the definition of "victim" under the law and expanding the reasons for which leave may be taken. This expansion has left many employers seeking clarification on the specific changes to the law.

New Definition of 'Victim'

First, AB 2499 redefined "victim" under the law. Now, victim is defined to mean an individual against whom a "qualifying act of violence" is committed.

A qualifying act of violence includes any of the following (regardless of whether anyone is arrested for, prosecuted for, or convicted of any crime):

- Domestic violence;
- Sexual assault;

- Stalking; or
- An act, conduct, or pattern of conduct where an individual:
 - Causes bodily injury or death to another individual;
 - Exhibits, draws, brandishes, or uses a firearm, or other dangerous weapon, with respect to another individual; or
 - Uses, or makes a reasonably perceived or actual threat to use, force against another individual to cause physical injury or death.

All employers must provide time off for employees who are victims of a qualifying act of violence and need to obtain or attempt to obtain any relief relating to the qualifying act of violence, which can

See Victims' Leave Law: Page 6

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Human Resources

Leaves of Absence. CalChamber. March 6–7, May 8–9, August 7–8, Online. (800) 331-8877.

HR Boot Camp. CalChamber. April 24–25, June 5–6, September 11–12, Online. (800) 331-8877.

International Trade

TIMTOS Show — A Global Leading Smart Manufacturing & Machine Tool Expo. Taiwan External Trade Development Council and Taiwan Association of Machinery Industry. March 3–8, Taipei City, Taiwan. (415) 362-7680 #500.

2025 California International Arbitration Week. California Lawyers Association. March 10–13, West Los Angeles. (916) 516-1757.

2025 Sports and Fitness Taiwan (TaiSPO) Exhibition. Taiwan External Trade Development Council. March 26–29, Taipei City, Taiwan.

Beyond Borders: Navigating the Indo-Pacific Export Landscape. National Association of District Export Councils. March 27, Online. [Registration required](#).

WCF Africa Summit 2025: Africa's Global Future. ICC World Chambers Federation and Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry. April 9–11, Nairobi, Kenya. ana.bernal@iccwbo.org.

Health Engineering and Minerals Show (HEMS) 2025 – Pakistan. Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP). April 17–19. 92-345-465-8469, omer.bajwa@tdap.gov.pk.

Exim 2025 Annual Conference. Export-Import Bank of the United States. April 29–30, Washington, D.C. In-person only. [Registration now open](#). Annual Export Conference. National Association of District Export Councils. May 19–20, Washington, D.C. [Conference website](#).

14th World Chambers Congress. World Chambers Congress. September 2–September 4, Melbourne, Australia. <https://wcc.iccwbo.org/>.

CalChamber Calendar

Women's Leadership Council:

March 6, Palm Desert

ChamberPAC Advisory Committee:

March 6, Palm Desert

Board of Directors:

March 6–7, Palm Desert

International Trade Breakfast:

March 7, Palm Desert

Next Alert: March 14

The Workplace

Potential Changes Coming to Workplace Violence Prevention Standards



In **Episode 216** of *The Workplace* podcast, CalChamber Associate General Counsel Matthew Roberts and CalChamber

Senior Policy Advocate Robert Moutrie discuss potential changes coming to the Workplace Violence Prevention Standards for General Industry.

Workplace violence prevention continues to be top of mind for California employers, even though the standard took effect in July 2024. The standard is complex and includes annual obligations for employers.

Changes to these standards now in the works with Cal/OSHA's Standards Board could further complicate this area of the law and compliance hurdles for employers, Roberts says, even as they work to hone prevention plans mandated by Senate Bill 553.

With SB 553 in place as law, regulators now have the latitude to refine and enhance the language of those standards within the Labor Code, developing a draft proposal through the advisory committee process before ultimately taking the changes to the board for final approval, Moutrie adds.

What Is a Workplace Hazard?

Moutrie notes that the legislation set the stage for the current process by outlining broad requirements in the Labor Code that could later be adjusted, such as adding expanded definitions of the specific types of hazards and what qualifies as a workplace violence incident.

"One of the areas they're looking at is adding very specific details in what's

considered a workplace violence hazard. And that's important because if the regulation says a certain thing is a workplace violence hazard, then you, as an employer, have an obligation to change or address that hazard," Moutrie says.

Some of the proposed language the advisory committee is considering includes a list of workplace hazards that could create new and often unavoidable burdens for many employers when it comes to mitigation, including working alone, frequent contact with the public, being open late, and working around valuables or goods. These overly broad definitions would have an outsized impact for businesses like convenience stores, retail establishments, bars and restaurants, to name a few.

"Obviously, taken together, a bunch of these things could create an unsafe scenario you might want to address, but individually, they are not a hazard by themselves, right?" Moutrie says. He adds that initial feedback seems to favor moving away from the overly broad or ambiguous language in this area.

Proposed Staffing Increases

Among the suggestions under consideration for the draft language are proposed prohibitions on employees confronting unruly customers or those they suspect of stealing merchandise.

Similarly, Moutrie notes that other proposals would mandate increased staffing to improve workplace safety as well as individual counseling for employees involved in a workplace violence incident.

He adds that it's unclear how more staff would help to improve safety if those employees were prohibited from the most basic of confrontations with customers. Such a mandate — an increased obligation over existing law —

would not only increase the cost burden to employers but could also mean that more employees could end up in harm's way in a workplace violence scenario.

To this end, Moutrie questions the limits of a confrontation. Would staff be prohibited from asking a loud customer to lower their voice in a restaurant or from asking a suspected thief to politely return items to the shelf or to leave the store? Importantly, security personnel would not face the same limits under the proposed changes, although their presence adds another potential layer of cost for employers.

Post-Incident Procedures

Current law says employers must have post-incident procedures but doesn't require a definitive list. Labor groups are pushing Cal/OSHA to mandate a more specific list of obligations for employers in their post-incident response, including an obligation to provide individual counseling in any post-incident response to any affected employee. This raises a lot of questions for employers, not the least of which are practicality, cost to employers and what will fit the definition of a violent incident.

What's Next: A Timeline

The existing law will likely remain in effect until the end of 2026. Draft language is expected to go before the Standards Board in December 2025, starting the formal rulemaking process, which will last about a year. The board must vote on the draft language by the end of 2026.

"Functionally, big picture, what that really means is whatever changes we end up with in this process are going to be going into effect for employers in early 2027," Moutrie says.

Luis Quiñonez to Lead CalChamber-Affiliated Research Group

From Page 1

position at a critical time for our state—when the issue of affordability is front and center and the importance of building a strong economic base could not be more consequential."

"CalChamber is the leading voice for California's business community and I am honored to be working together

at the helm of CFCE," said Quiñonez. "Our goal will be a balanced approach to solving our present challenges while taking advantage of tomorrow's opportunities. Our work will help illuminate the economic reality of legislative policies impacting all sectors of California's economy. It is vital for California's continued status as one of the world's largest

economies that public policy is brought forward which creates prosperity for all Californians."

Quiñonez has more than 20 years of experience in public policy, public affairs, government relations and research. His career has included positions in both the public and private sector.

Kern Energy President/CEO Jennifer Haley to Chair California Foundation for Commerce and Education in 2025



California Foundation for Commerce & Education

Jennifer M. Haley, president and CEO of Kern Energy, has been elected as the 2025 chair of the California Foundation for Commerce and Education (CFCE) Board of Directors.

“As the new Chair of the California Foundation for Commerce and Education, I am grateful to be a part of CFCE’s mission to strengthen California’s economy. By championing a healthy California business environment and providing objective research, we establish foundational data and insight that empower informed policy decisions and meaningful progress.

“Our state’s potential is limitless, and I am excited to work alongside CFCE President Luis Quiñonez, our board, and leading experts to advance research that fuels job growth, economic resilience, and innovation across the state,” said Haley.

CFCE President Luis A. Quiñonez welcomed Haley, stating, “It is a privilege to work with Jennifer Haley as CFCE’s

new Chair. Jennifer’s expertise in energy policy and the role of private enterprise in driving innovation will be instrumental in advancing our research on California’s evolving energy landscape.

“At CFCE, we are committed to conducting research that supports economic growth, and Jennifer’s deep understanding of the energy sector will add a critical perspective to the discussions we’ll be having this year. I look forward to our work together and the opportunity to further strengthen California’s economy.”



Jennifer M. Haley

Jennifer Haley

When Jennifer Haley took the helm of Kern Energy as CEO in 2018, she became one of just a few female CEOs in the refining industry—and the first in California.

One of the first refineries in the nation to produce renewable diesel, Kern Energy has produced more than 57 million gallons of renewable diesel while continuing to reliably provide 1% of the state’s gasoline and 3% of its diesel fuel.

Under Haley’s leadership, Kern Energy has embraced an all-of-the-above approach to help lead statewide efforts to promote energy resilience, clean energy and collaborative solutions that protect the economy and environment.

Haley holds leadership positions on the Board of Directors for the California Chamber of Commerce, serving as an at-large member of the Chamber’s Executive Committee in 2024, and on the Foundation Board of the California Science Center.

About CFCE

The CFCE, a nonprofit nonpartisan think tank affiliated with the California Chamber of Commerce, is dedicated to preserving and strengthening the California business climate and private enterprise through education of the public and policy makers on the virtues of private enterprise, educational attainment, and a strong economic base; accurate, impartial and objective research and analysis of public policy issues of interest to the California business and public policy communities; and education and outreach efforts in support of the research and public policy findings and recommendations.



Navigating California Business Just Got Easier!

Running a business in California is demanding. CalChamber understands and offers ways to ease your burden. Join us to save and optimize your operations.

[Join CalChamber](#)



The True Cost of U.S. Tariffs on Canada



Rana Sarkar

The Canada-U.S. trading relationship is at an inflection point, and how we meet this moment will affect North American economic security and competitive-

ness for decades to come.

We face a significant threat to North American free trade, with potential U.S. tariffs that could harm the US\$1 trillion Canada-U.S. economic partnership — a partnership that supports security and prosperity for millions. In the United States, 8 million jobs are linked to trade with Canada, including over 840,000 jobs with Canadian companies — 90,000 of which are in California.

Integrated Supply Chains

Our North American industrial base is stronger and more resilient due to the flow of talent, investment, and innovation between Canada and the United States, and our deeply integrated supply chains across sectors like automobiles, construction and agriculture.

By trading essential goods at competitive prices, Canada and the United States make life more affordable for millions of people in both countries. In California, Canada is not only your largest international customer for agriculture and agri-food products, including wine, but also one of your top sources of foreign direct investment.

But tariffs threaten this mutually beneficial partnership. While they'll hit Canadian exporters hardest, the true cost will be felt far more widely, including by U.S. companies, workers and consumers. In a trade war, there are no winners.

Potential tariffs on Canadian exports could take effect as early as March 4, including 25% on goods and 10% on energy. Additional 25% tariffs on steel and aluminum may start March 12, potentially raising tariffs on Canadian

steel to 50% or more. The Trump administration has also proposed 25% tariffs on automobiles, lumber, and forest products, set for April 2. Further global and reciprocal tariffs could be introduced soon, pushing tariffs even higher.

In every one of these scenarios, the prices Americans pay for food, gas, housing, vehicles and appliances will go up, with low-income families and small businesses facing the biggest strain from cost increases.

Guest Commentary By Rana Sarkar

Cost Impacts

Where will American industry and consumers see the biggest impacts?

- **Higher costs for food and agricultural inputs:** Over 70% of U.S. potash — a critical input boosting agricultural production — is sourced from Canada. A 25% tariff on Canadian potash could cost U.S. farmers \$1.2 billion. If tariffs cause fertilizer to become more expensive, farmers may use less, crop yields will decrease, and food prices will go up.

- **Housing:** Over 80% of U.S. softwood lumber imports come from Canada. U.S. tariffs on Canadian lumber will make construction more expensive at a time that communities in California are urgently trying to build. A 25% tariff could raise the cost of new home builds by more than US\$30,000.

- **Energy:** Over 60% of U.S. crude oil imports come from Canada, which supplies nearly a quarter of U.S. refinery intake. Tariffs on Canadian energy will be a tax on U.S. consumers, raising prices at the pump across the country. Industry analysts estimate that a 10% tariff on Canadian crude oil could raise gas prices by over 20 cents per gallon.

- **Manufacturing:** About 70% of Canadian exports to the United States are used in manufacturing, and Canada supplies nearly a quarter of U.S. steel imports. Tariffs on Canadian steel, aluminum, and critical minerals will raise

production costs for key California industries like electronics, automotive, and aerospace, while also weakening U.S. supply chain resilience in defense, agriculture, and information technology (IT).

Canada's Commitment

Canada is committed to strengthening our economic partnership with the United States and to working together to resolve shared concerns, including related to border security. Despite Canada being responsible for less than 0.2% of fentanyl and under 1% of illegal migration into the United States, we are investing over US\$1 billion in new equipment, infrastructure, and technology; launching a Canada-U.S. Joint Strike Force to combat organized crime, illegal fentanyl, and money laundering; and appointing a new Fentanyl Czar.

However, despite these actions, there is no guarantee that tariffs will not be imposed. And if tariffs are placed on Canada, our government will respond and stand up for the deal that we struck with the United States, which provides for 99% tariff-free trade between our two countries.

Trading Relationship

This is a crucial moment for the Canada-U.S. partnership. Our trading relationship is the foundation of the strongest, safest, most prosperous partnership in the world. We cannot let trade barriers harm our workers, our industries, or the progress we've made. The true cost of tariffs goes beyond higher prices and job losses — it will erode the United States' strategic advantage, making North America and the U.S. less competitive and secure.

We thank our friends at CalChamber for the opportunity to share this message, and we urge our trusted partners to continue mobilizing and communicating the value of this partnership. We are committed to working with you to preserve a secure and prosperous North America.

Rana Sarkar is Consul General of Canada in Northern California.

H-1B Initial Registration Period to Open March 7



The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced that the fiscal

year 2026 H-1B cap initial registration period will open at noon Eastern on **Friday, March 7, 2025**, and run until noon Eastern on **Monday, March 24, 2025**.

The H-1B process allows U.S. employers to hire a set number of skilled foreign professionals when they are unable to hire citizens with the same skills. The USCIS limits H-1B visas to 85,000 each year — 65,000 for applicants with bachelor's degrees or equivalent, and 20,000 for those holding a master's degree or higher. Additionally, 6,800 H-1B visas out of the 65,000 are reserved for applicants from Chile and Singapore.

An online USCIS account is required to register beneficiaries, and employers petitioning on behalf of a registrant can

create a [myUSCIS account](#) at any time. Representatives also can add clients to their accounts, but both representatives and registrants must wait until March 7 to enter beneficiary information and pay the registration fee.

Also, remember the [USCIS's new fee schedule](#) went into effect in April 2024, so registration has increased from \$10 per beneficiary to \$215.

If enough unique beneficiaries are received by March 24 — and there usually are — the USCIS will randomly select beneficiaries with the intent to notify prospective petitioners and representatives of their selection by March 31.

Additionally, due to the volume of previous H-1B registrations, the U.S. Department of Treasury has temporarily approved an increase for the daily credit card transaction limit, raising it from \$24,999.99 to \$99,999.99 per day. Payments of more than \$99,999.99 can be made through the Automated Clearing House (ACH).

The USCIS notes that several organizational account enhancements have been made for fiscal year 2026, including:

- The ability for paralegals to work with more than one legal representative, allowing them to accept invitations from multiple accounts for the preparation of H-1B registrations, Form I-129 H-1B petitions and Form I-907 requests;
- A streamlined way for legal representatives to add paralegals to company clients;
- The pre-population of certain Form I-129 fields from selected H-1B registrations; and
- The ability to prepare a spreadsheet of H-1B beneficiary data and upload the information to pre-populate data in H-1B registrations.

The [USCIS H-1B Electronic Registration Process](#) has additional resources and frequently asked questions.

Staff Contact: Eyragon Eidam

Victims' Leave Law Creates New Obligations, Expands Others

From Page 2

include obtaining a temporary restraining order or other court-ordered relief.

Expanded Reasons for Leave

Employers with 25 or more employees previously had to provide leave to employees who were victims and needed to seek medical treatment, counseling, or other services.

AB 2499 expanded this portion of the law to allow employees to take time off for a broader set of reasons, including obtaining relief, medical attention, or victim services, participating in safety planning, preparing for and participating in legal proceedings, and more.

In addition, employees can take the leave for these reasons either because they or a "family member" is a victim of a qualifying act of violence.

Family member is defined in the law as a child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, or domestic partner (as those terms are defined under the California Family Rights Act (CFRA)) or a "designated person."

A designated person is defined as any individual related by blood or whose association with the employee is

the equivalent of a family relationship. Employees can identify a designated person at the time they request leave, and employers can limit employees to one designated person per 12-month period for purposes of this leave.

Expansion of Reasonable Accommodations

AB 2499 also expanded the requirement that employers of all sizes provide reasonable accommodations for an employee who requests an accommodation for their safety while working.

Previously, reasonable accommodations were required only if an employee was a victim. Now, employers also must provide accommodations for an employee whose family member is a victim of a qualifying act of violence.

Change in Responsibility for Enforcement

AB 2499 moved crime victims' leave from the Labor Code to the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA), which means the California Civil Rights Department (CRD) now has authority to enforce the law.

New Notice Coming

Lastly, AB 2499 includes a notice requirement. The CRD has until July 1, 2025, to publish a form notice (*Survivors of Violence and Family Members of Victims Rights Leave and Accommodations*) regarding employees' protections under the law.

Once it is published, employers must provide it: to new employees at hire; to all employees annually; to employees upon request; and when an employee informs the employer that they or a family member is a victim.

California employers should review and update their employee handbooks to ensure they accurately track the changes to Victims' Leave and Accommodations that went into effect on January 1, 2025.

Column based on questions asked by callers on the Labor Law Helpline, a service to California Chamber of Commerce preferred members and above. For expert explanations of labor laws and Cal/OSHA regulations, not legal counsel for specific situations, call (800) 348-2262 or submit your question at www.hrcalifornia.com.

Proposed Privacy/Security Rules: CalChamber Raises Concerns

From Page 1

- Overreach the CPPA's statutory authority and encroach on the California Legislature and Governor's ongoing efforts to strike a balance in regulating automated decision-making technologies (ADMT);

- Conflict with existing statutory rights and exemptions;

- Depart from established global privacy frameworks and standards;

- Undercut foundational constitutional protections; and

- Drastically underestimate the costs that the draft regulations will impose on businesses and the state.

The CalChamber also urged the agency to allow for a full 24 months to come into compliance with the updated regulations and the new articles.

"The cybersecurity audit and risk assessment timelines already recognize a 24-month time frame. Accordingly, the ADMT requirements and the modifications to the existing regulations should also be afforded a 24-month time frame for compliance," the CalChamber said.

The CalChamber also requested that the CPPA make clear that the regulations apply only to processing activities that occur after the regulations enter into effect.

To read the CalChamber's submitted comments, [click here](#).

Economic Report

Economists' Report on Cost Assessment of New Regulations Indicates the Agency Has Drastically Underestimated the Cost to Businesses and Overestimated the Savings to the State

A report released last November by the CalChamber concluded that businesses, consumers, and governments in California will suffer net economic losses, translating into reduced jobs and tax revenues, from the CPPA's proposed rules.

The report, prepared by Capitol Matrix Consulting (CMC), analyzes anticipated savings detailed in the CPPA Standardized Regulatory Impact Assessment of proposed regulations that would add and change existing rules related to the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) of 2018 as amended by the California Privacy Rights Act (CPRA) of 2020.

The SRIA concludes that the regulations would result in direct costs to California businesses of \$3.5 billion in the first full year and average annual costs to businesses over the first 10 years of \$1.08 billion and will result in employment losses peaking at 126,000 in 2030. Similarly, it estimates annual state revenue losses reaching \$2.8 billion in 2028.

While the SRIA claims long-term benefits will exceed these costs, the report reveals that the purported benefits are based on an arithmetical error and speculative assumptions.

Privacy Agency Understates Costs

Specifically, the CMC report details errors in the SRIA that include:

- Underestimating external auditor and employee compensation rates paid by businesses;

- Excluding from its economic analysis out-of-state businesses that sell into California markets; and

- Ignoring the massive ongoing costs and business productivity losses resulting from behavioral changes by businesses and consumers following adoption of the regulations.

Privacy Agency Overstates Savings

In addition, the SRIA overstates the savings from the proposed regulations by:

- Grossly overestimating baseline cybercrime losses due to an arithmetical error and other factors, including a flawed approach to estimating future cybercrime losses; and

- Overestimating savings from audits and risk assessments based on assumptions not supported by the literature, including articles listed in the SRIA.

The CMC analysis warns that there are major implications for California jobs and state budget revenues from the privacy agency's underestimate of costs and overestimate of benefits of the proposed regulations.

A full copy of the analysis is available [here](#).

Staff Contact: Ronak Daylami

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