

**ACADEMIC SENATE
OF
THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY**

AS-3527-22/EX (Rev)
January 20-21, 2022

**ENDORSEMENT OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (CSSA)
RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE CSU TO INCLUDE CASTE IN
ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY**

- RESOLVED:** That the Academic Senate of the California State University (ASCSU) endorse the CSSA “Resolution Calling for The CSU to Include Caste in Anti-Discriminatory Policy,” which reflects the caste oppression concerns and voice of over 487,000 students in the CSU; and be it further
- RESOLVED:** That the ASCSU commend the CSU Office of the Chancellor and CSU Board of Trustees for adding caste to the [“Interim CSU Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Exploitation, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, Stalking, and Retaliation”](#) that protects the full participation rights of all CSU faculty, students, and staff; and be it further
- RESOLVED:** That the ASCSU urge campus senates to review their policies in order to revise or develop new policies for prohibiting caste discrimination; and be it further
- RESOLVED:** That the ASCSU distribute this resolution to the CSU Board of Trustees, CSU Chancellor, CSU campus Presidents, CSU campus Senate Chairs, CSU campus Senate Executive Committees, CSU Provosts/Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs, California Faculty Association (CFA), California State Student Association (CSSA), and the CSU Emeritus and Retired Faculty and Staff Association (CSUERFSA).

***RATIONALE:** When CSSA passed their “Resolution Calling for the CSU to Include Caste in Anti-Discriminatory Policy,” the goal was to bring attention to the ways in which caste oppression creates barriers to students’ success for Dalit or “untouchable” class students in the CSU. These barriers manifest as verbal and physical assaults, unfair treatment during their educational pursuits, and derogatory comments in their everyday lived experiences. This resolution endorses the California State Student Association’s (CSSA) resolution; affirms the ASCSU’s commitment to reducing barriers to faculty and student success that caste discrimination can create; and continued conversation on the extent to which caste discrimination can be address through shared governance. For more information, please see the attached CSSA resolution and embedded link to the “Interim CSU Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment,*

Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Exploitation, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, Stalking, and Retaliation.

The Academic Senate of the California State University (ASCSU) recognize the barriers to student success that caste can create for students of the California State University (CSU).

Approved Unanimously – March 17-18, 2022



RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE CSU TO INCLUDE CASTE IN ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

- WHEREAS:** the California State Student Association (CSSA) is the single recognized voice for over 487,000 students of the California State University (CSU) system; and
- WHEREAS:** Caste is a structure of oppression that affects over 1 billion people across the world based in birth that determines social status and assigns “spiritual purity”;¹ and
- WHEREAS:** There are four main caste groups: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras, and those outside the caste system entirely, with lower caste Shudras and those outside the caste system, known as Dalits meaning “broken but resilient” and formerly known as “untouchables”, considered oppressed by caste; and
- WHEREAS:** Caste-oppressed groups continue to experience profound injustices including socioeconomic inequalities, usurpation of their land, rights, and experience brutal violence at the hands of the “upper” Castes; and
- WHEREAS:** 25 percent of Dalits who responded to a survey, of 1,200 respondents, executed by Equality Labs reported facing verbal or physical assault based on their caste in the United States; and²
- WHEREAS:** One in three Dalit students report being discriminated against during their education in the United States; and³
- WHEREAS:** Two out of three Dalits surveyed reported being treated unfairly at their workplace in the United States; and⁴
- WHEREAS:** 60 percent of Dalits report experiencing caste-based derogatory jokes or comments in the United States; and⁵
- WHEREAS:** 20 percent of Dalit respondents report feeling discriminated at a place of business because of their caste in the United States; and⁶

¹ <https://www.equalitylabs.org/castesurvey>

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

- WHEREAS:** All of these inequalities associated with caste status have become embedded in all of the major South Asian American institutions and they extend into American mainstream institutions that have significant South Asian immigrant populations, with some of the caste social locators being last names, whether a family eats meat, whether they own land in their country of origin, who they want to marry or be in romantic relationships with, and whether they are allowed to be out in their place of worship and community; and⁷
- WHEREAS:** In a Caste in America series it was stated, “Caste-based discrimination often appears in higher education institutions, according to a report published last year by Equality Labs, a Dalit research organization”⁸; and
- WHEREAS:** The series also noted, “Overall, students from India represent the second-largest group of international students in the US But universities are just beginning to address caste dynamics among its student population”⁹; and
- WHEREAS:** In the last decade alone, numerous incidents of caste-based discrimination and suicides of Dalit students have been reported on the campuses across the country¹⁰; and
- WHEREAS:** This resolution would be an important first step to addressing campus Caste-based discrimination since, “there is scarcely any research on the changed demographic [*growing population of lower caste students on college campuses*] in higher education and its implications on students and the campus climate”¹¹; and
- WHEREAS:** Lack of Caste-based Anti-Discrimination Policies make it difficult to find data of student’s facing Caste-based discrimination since there is no policy to categories the discrimination; and
- WHEREAS:** The CSU, “Strives to be free of all forms of Discrimination, including Harassment, because of any Protected Status: i.e., age, Disability (physical and mental), Gender (or sex), Gender Identity (including transgender), Gender Expression, Genetic Information, Marital Status, Medical Condition, Nationality, Race or Ethnicity (including color or ancestry), Religion (or Religious Creed), Sexual Orientation, sex stereotype, and Veteran or Military Status”; and¹²

⁷https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58347d04bebafeb1e66df84c/t/5d9b4f9afbaef569c0a5c132/1570459664518/Caste_report_2018.pdf

⁸ <https://www.pri.org/stories/2019-03-08/caste-discrimination-exists-college-campuses-some-schools-are-trying-change?amp:>

⁹ <https://www.pri.org/stories/2019-03-08/caste-discrimination-exists-college-campuses-some-schools-are-trying-change?amp:>

¹⁰ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/2394481119900838>

¹¹ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/2394481119900838>

¹² <https://calstate.policystat.com/policy/8453516/latest/>

- WHEREAS:** However, current CSU policy prohibiting discrimination includes many of the identities intertwined with caste, but does not protect from caste-based discrimination specifically; and ¹³
- WHEREAS:** Caste discrimination has long been overlooked by American institutions, with almost all institutions in the United States failing to protect caste oppressed people, highlighted most recently by the state of California’s ongoing lawsuit against Cisco regarding caste discrimination in the workplace; and ¹⁴
- WHEREAS:** Brandeis University was the first US university to ban caste-based discrimination¹⁵, understanding that “caste identity is so intertwined with many of the legally recognized and protected characteristics, discrimination based on a person’s caste is effectively the same”¹⁶; and
- WHEREAS:** In addition to Brandeis University, the University of California, Berkeley, and Harvard University have begun to explore caste issues on their campuses¹⁷; and
- WHEREAS:** The addition of caste within the anti-discrimination policy will make the California State University’s in compliance with the recommendations of Equality Labs, an international human rights organization; and
- WHEREAS:** The addition of caste within the anti-discrimination policy will reaffirm and add to the CSU’s commitment to diversity, equity and support for those most systemically marginalized; and therefore be it
- RESOLVED:** That CSSA commits to advocating for the addition of caste in anti-discrimination policy moving forward through conversations with the Chancellor’s Office that include students; and be it further
- RESOLVED:** That CSSA calls upon the CSU Board of Trustees to implement an addition of caste in the CSU anti-discrimination policy on, or before, the June 18th CSU Board of Trustees meeting; and be it further
- RESOLVED:** This addition of caste as a protected category should be paired with assurance that staff working in the Title IX office are given resources to learn and better understand what caste is, such as the report on “Caste in the United States” from Equality Labs¹⁸; and be it finally

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ <https://www.npr.org/2020/10/12/922936053/california-workplace-discrimination-system-sheds-light-on-caste-system>

¹⁵ <https://www.insightintodiversity.com/brandeis-becomes-first-us-university-to-ban-caste-based-discrimination/>

¹⁶ <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/12/20/university-adds-caste-nondiscrimination-policy>

¹⁷ <https://www.pri.org/stories/2019-03-08/caste-discrimination-exists-college-campuses-some-schools-are-trying-change>

¹⁸ <https://www.equalitylabs.org/castesurvey>

RESOLVED: The California State Student Association will make this document public and will forward this resolution to all affected parties including all 23 CSU Presidents, CSU Board of Trustees, Chancellor Joseph I. Castro, Academic Senate of the CSU, The California Faculty Association.

