

[Motion to Submit Letters of Support for AB 1155: Law Schools: Externships:
Compensation]

**Motion to urge the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and Mayor to support
Assembly Bill 1155: Law schools: externships: compensation**

WHEREAS, Externships for law students are “work performed by a law student
at a state agency, nongovernmental organization, nonprofit organization, or for-profit
firm, as part of their legal education, that is completed within the law school’s course
guidelines to receive law school credit”¹; and

WHEREAS, Externships provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge
learned in the classroom in professional environments and explore career paths before
making long-term commitments; and

WHEREAS, California-accredited law schools require law students to complete a
minimum of six credit hours of experiential learning, which externships can fulfill; and

WHEREAS, The current lack of compensation creates barriers for low-income
law students to pursue externships, allowing for compensation will increase accessibility
to these opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Every year, several hundred students pursue law school in San
Francisco; and

WHEREAS, The cost of completing a J.D. program is nearly \$175,000 at
American Bar Association-approved law schools, and for University of California-
accredited law schools, the cost is over \$75,000; and

¹ California Assembly Bill No. 1155, Law schools: externships: compensation, introduced by Assembly Member Mike Fong, Feb. 20, 2025; amended Mar. 24, 2025; read third time and passed Assembly May 23, 2025; accessed via final PDF, <https://ahed.assembly.ca.gov/system/files/2025-04/ab-1155-final.pdf>.

1 WHEREAS, One-third of law students are first-generation, and 35% of first-
2 generation law students are expected to accumulate more than \$120,000 in debt to
3 obtain a law degree; and

4 WHEREAS, In August 2024, the ABA House of Delegates adopted Resolution
5 514, which encouraged the compensation of law school externs; and

6 WHEREAS, The ABA Young Lawyers Division's 2021 student loan debt survey
7 revealed that over half of respondents accumulated more than \$150,000 in debt after
8 graduating law school, and 40% of student loan debt increased²; and

9 WHEREAS, The most recent congressional spending bill HR 1, caps graduate
10 school loans for law students to \$200,000 with interest occurring immediately making
11 AB 1155 critical in this time³; and

12 WHEREAS, The accumulation of debt has impeded law students from pursuing
13 homeownership, marriage, etc.; and

14 WHEREAS, Law students carrying debt reported higher levels of stress, anxiety,
15 and depression⁴; and

16 WHEREAS, AB 1155 requires externship sites to compensate law students
17 enrolled in American Bar Association-accredited or University of California-accredited
18 law schools or independent institutions of higher education; and

19 WHEREAS, Given the significant debt burden and increasing demand for legal
20 professionals, there is a clear need for this bill to support the next generation of lawyers;
21 and therefore be it

² American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division and AccessLex Institute, Student Debt, COVID-19 Relief, and Loan Forgiveness: Perspectives From Today's Young Lawyers (ABA Young Lawyers Division and AccessLex Institute, 2021), https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/young_lawyers/2021-student-loan-survey.pdf.

³ U.S. Congress, House, *One Big Beautiful Bill Act*, H.R. 1, 119th Cong. (2025).

⁴ ABA Young Lawyers Division and AccessLex, Student Debt

1 MOVED, That the San Francisco Youth Commission hereby urges the Mayor
2 and Board of Supervisors to advise the State Legislature, especially San Francisco's
3 legislative representatives, including Senator Scott Wiener, Assemblymember Catherine
4 Stefani, and Assemblymember Matt Haney, to support AB 1155; and therefore be it

5 FURTHER MOVED, That the San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Mayor
6 and Board of Supervisors to recognize the contributions of law students in strengthening
7 justice, representation, and equity in the legal system, and to acknowledge both the
8 rising costs of legal education and their pivotal role in inspiring young people to pursue
9 legal professions.

**Motion to Submit Letter of Support for AB1155: Law schools: Externships:
Compensation.**

Supplemental Information:

See attached document [Letter of Support]

Youth Commission
City Hall ~ Room 345
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place



(415) 554-6446
(415) 554-6140 FAX

San Francisco Youth Commission
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Pl
Room 345,
San Francisco, CA 94102

July 7, 2025

Assemblymember Mike Fong
1021 O Street,
Suite 5650,
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for AB1155: Law schools: Externships: Compensation

Dear Assemblymember Fong,

We are writing in support of your bill, AB 1155.

The San Francisco Youth Commission comprises 17 youth from San Francisco, aged 12 to 23. Created by the voters under a 1995 amendment to the City Charter, the commission is responsible for advising the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor on policies and laws related to young people. The Youth Commission is also charged with providing comments and recommendations on all proposed laws that would primarily affect youth before the Board of Supervisors takes final action.

The San Francisco Youth Commission urges AB 1155 to be passed as it requires externship sites to compensate law students enrolled in American Bar Association-accredited or University of California-accredited law schools or independent institutions of higher education.

Youth Commission
City Hall ~ Room 345
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The Youth Commission has historically supported educational opportunities for all students and youth workforce development, regardless of income level. For example, in our FY 2025-2026 / FY 2026-2027 Budget and Policy Priorities, we stressed the need for more opportunities for youth to develop workforce skills, particularly for low-income youth and youth from historically underprivileged backgrounds. Workforce development opportunities like externships help youth find employment and begin careers in fields such as law.

Thank you for your advocacy on this important issue and for helping create more opportunities for young Californians.

Sincerely,

San Francisco Youth Commission, 2024 - 2025