



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

OCT 07 2023

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 299 without my signature.

Beginning January 1, 2025, this bill authorizes a civil action against a public or private institution of higher education by a person harmed by hazing involving an organization affiliated with the educational institution when the institution had direct involvement in, knew of, or "in the exercise of ordinary care reasonably should have known" of the hazing and unreasonably failed to prevent, discover, or stop the hazing.

Hazing has no place in public or private institutions of higher education (IHE). I agree that IHEs that knowingly support hazing or fail to take reasonable steps to prevent hazing should be accountable. However, as drafted, this bill goes much further than that, creating expansive financial exposure even for IHEs that are taking appropriate steps to protect their students from hazing. I encourage the author to more clearly define when liability arises when IHEs have taken statutorily defined reasonable steps to prevent hazing.

For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,



Gavin Newsom

