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SB-521 Public employment: disqualification. (2025-2026)

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Senate Bill No. 521

CHAPTER 92

An act to amend Section 1021.5 of, and to add Section 1021.6 to, the Government Code, relating to public employment.

[Approved by Governor July 30, 2025. Filed with Secretary of State July 30, 2025.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 521, Gonzalez. Public employment: disqualification.

Existing law disqualifies a public employee, as defined, from any public employment for 5 years if the employee is convicted of any felony involving accepting or giving, or offering to give, a bribe, the embezzlement of public money, extortion or theft of public money, perjury, or conspiracy to commit any of those crimes arising directly out of their official duties.

This bill would expand that provision to include any felony involving a conflict of interest. The bill would also disqualify a city manager or city attorney, as defined, including an individual acting under contract with the city for those services, who is convicted of any of the above-described felonies, from any future public employment in an equivalent role.

The bill would include findings that changes proposed by this bill address a matter of statewide concern rather than a municipal affair and, therefore, apply to all cities, including charter cities.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 1021.5 of the Government Code is amended to read:

1021.5. (a) If a public employee is convicted of any felony involving accepting or giving, or offering to give, any bribe, conflict of interest, the embezzlement of public money, extortion or theft of public money, perjury, or conspiracy to commit any of those crimes arising directly out of their official duties as a public employee, the public employee shall be disqualified for five years from any public employment, including, but not limited to, employment with a city, county, district, or any other public agency of the state.

(b) The five-year disqualification period described in subdivision (a) shall begin on the later of either of the following:

(1) The date of final conviction.

(2) The date on which the public employee is released from any incarceration.

(c) For purposes of this section, "public employee" means any person employed at will for the purposes of providing services to an elected public officer who takes public office, or is reelected to public office, on or after January 1, 2013.

SEC. 2. Section 1021.6 is added to the Government Code, to read:

1021.6. (a) A city manager or city attorney, including an individual acting under contract with the city for those services, who is convicted of any felony set forth in Section 1021.5, shall be disqualified from any future public employment in an equivalent role.

(b) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) "City attorney" means any person employed pursuant to Section 41801 on or after January 1, 2026.

(2) "City manager" means any person employed pursuant to Section 34851 on or after January 1, 2026.

SEC. 3. The Legislature finds and declares that the integrity of public employees is a matter of statewide concern and is not a municipal affair as that term is used in Section 5 of Article XI of the California Constitution. Therefore, Sections 1 and 2 of this act, which amend Section 1021.5 of, and add Section 1021.6 to, the Government Code apply to all cities, including charter cities.