



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

OCT 11 2015

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 967 without my signature.

This bill would require public and independent postsecondary institutions that receive student financial aid from the state to adopt and implement uniform disciplinary processes for sexual assault and to apply consistent standards for expulsion, suspension, loss of institutional aid or scholarship, loss of privileges and removal from student housing. Additionally, this bill would require annual reporting of data and recommend a minimum period of suspension, or expulsion, for the most egregious violations of sexual assault policies.

College campuses must deal with sexual assault fairly and with clear standards of process. It is eminently reasonable to expect that discipline shall not vary based on a student's status as an athlete or a declared area of study. This bill, however, could deprive professionals from using their better judgment to discipline according to relevant circumstances. Moreover, it creates an expectation that the state should recommend minimum penalties for violations of specific campus policies.

Last year, I signed Senate Bill 967, making California the first state in the country to define the terms of sexual consent for college students, so that our higher education institutions could better prevent sexual violence on campuses. This year, I signed AB 913 to ensure that existing jurisdictional agreements between postsecondary institutions and local law enforcement include responsibility for investigating sexual assaults and hate crimes.

Given these actions, I don't think it is necessary at this point for the state to directly insert itself into the disciplinary and governing processes of all private nonprofit and public colleges in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edmund G. Brown Jr." with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Edmund G. Brown Jr.