

The Tribal Bills Report

California Tribal legislation after the 2026 finish line - and what happens next.

PUBLIC COMMUNITY BRIEFING · Updated September 2, 2026 · v0.2.2

The Legislature is done. The watch has moved to the Governor.

The August 27 snapshot is no longer enough. The final legislative days moved nearly every tracked California Tribal measure out of floor or concurrence posture. The useful question now is what reaches the Governor, what is signed or vetoed, what becomes chaptered law, and what implementation follows.

1 tracked measure already law	12 tracked measures cleared both houses	1 tracked measure held	Sep. 30 Governor action horizon
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Independent civic work by Christopher Knorr. Community information, not legal advice. Official legislative and governmental records control current status. AI materially assisted source retrieval, comparison, drafting, artifact construction, and QA. Final public release remains a human judgment against the exact release checksum.

Where the tracked California bills stand now

Stage labels describe public legislative posture as checked September 2. They are snapshots, not predictions of enactment.

Measure	Subject	Stage as checked Sep. 2	Watch next
AB 2018	Missing persons: DNA testing	LAW NOW - CHAPTER 93	Watch DOJ implementation and MMIP overlap.
AB 31	Tribal Police Program	PRESENTED TO GOVERNOR - AUG. 31	Governor action; September 30 is the outside signing/veto deadline for covered bills.
AB 1824	Indian-child guardianship and conservatorship	PRESENTED TO GOVERNOR - AUG. 31	Governor action; if signed, implementation in Probate Code/ICWA practice.
AB 2187	State contracts with California Tribes	PRESENTED TO GOVERNOR - AUG. 27	Governor action.
AB 2218	Tribal water policy	ENROLLED - AUG. 30	Presentation to Governor, then sign/veto/chaptering; implementation if enacted.
AB 2115	Rowena Mae Ramos Act / formal apology	ENROLLED - AUG. 30	Presentation to Governor and Governor action.
AB 2507	Office of Tribal Affairs	ENROLLED - SEPT. 1	Presentation to Governor and Governor action.
AB 1641	Tribal colleges in public higher education	ENROLLED - SEPT. 1	Presentation to Governor and Governor action.
SB 891	Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Justice Program	ENROLLED - AUG. 31	Presentation to Governor and Governor action.
AB 1881	California Indian Freedom Act of 2026	PASSED LEGISLATURE / ENGROSSING & ENROLLING - AUG. 30	Enrollment/presentation to Governor; then Governor action by the applicable deadline.
AB 1581	AI/AN education data reporting	PASSED LEGISLATURE / ENGROSSING & ENROLLING - AUG. 28	Enrollment/presentation to Governor; then Governor action.
AB 1841	Native American Day for state employees	PASSED LEGISLATURE / ENGROSSING & ENROLLING - AUG. 31	Enrollment/presentation to Governor; then Governor action.
AB 1769	Transfer pathways from Tribal colleges	PASSED LEGISLATURE / ENGROSSING & ENROLLING - AUG. 28	Enrollment/presentation to Governor; then Governor action.
SB 1326	CEQA and Tribal cultural-resource mitigation	HELD / NOT ADVANCING THIS SESSION	No current floor path; watch for later-session return or a new measure.

Already law

LAW NOW - CHAPTER 93

AB 2018 - Missing persons: DNA testing

Approved July 16 and chaptered as Chapter 93. The law broadens the Missing Persons DNA Program so the identification system is not limited to deceased or narrowly defined high-risk cases. The practical MMIP question now shifts from passage to DOJ implementation and the usefulness of the broader identification capacity.

Watch next: Watch DOJ implementation and MMIP overlap.

[Official status](#)

Presented to the Governor

PRESENTED TO GOVERNOR - AUG. 31

AB 31 - Tribal Police Program

Would make the state Tribal Police Program permanent rather than allowing the current pilot to expire. It does not create blanket California peace-officer status for every Tribal officer; statutory qualification, certification, Tribal-law or resolution, transparency, and limited-waiver requirements remain central.

Watch next: Governor action; September 30 is the outside signing/veto deadline for covered bills.

[Official status](#)

PRESENTED TO GOVERNOR - AUG. 31

AB 1824 - Indian-child guardianship and conservatorship

Would bring Probate Code guardianship and conservatorship proceedings involving Indian children into a more explicit ICWA-aligned framework, including inquiry and notice, Tribal participation and transfer, active efforts, expert evidence, and placement preferences.

Watch next: Governor action; if signed, implementation in Probate Code/ICWA practice.

[Official status](#)

PRESENTED TO GOVERNOR - AUG. 27

AB 2187 - State contracts with California Tribes

Would change state contracting rules for specified services that only a federally recognized California Native American Tribe can perform, including limited routes for wholly Tribal-owned entities under defined conditions.

Watch next: Governor action.

[Official status](#)

Enrolled and moving toward Governor action

ENROLLED - AUG. 30

AB 2218 - Tribal water policy

Would establish state policy addressing Tribal water inequities through financial assistance, protection of Tribal beneficial uses, consultation, Indigenous knowledge, and a mediation process for specified implementation disputes. If enacted, the next questions become administrative: how agencies build the procedures and whether Tribes can use them effectively.

Watch next: Presentation to Governor, then sign/veto/chaptering; implementation if enacted.

[Official status](#)

ENROLLED - AUG. 30

AB 2115 - Rowena Mae Ramos Act / formal apology

Would place into statute a formal state recognition of responsibility and apology for harms and atrocities carried out against California Native Americans and require a memorial plaque in the State Capitol. If enacted, implementation of the statutory recognition and memorial becomes the next record to watch.

Watch next: Presentation to Governor and Governor action.

[Official status](#)

ENROLLED - SEPT. 1

AB 2507 - Office of Tribal Affairs

The August precision repair still controls: existing statute establishes the Governor's Tribal Advisor, while the administration has operated an Office/Secretary of Tribal Affairs since 2022. The bill would codify that newer operating structure and related agency-liaison/consultation requirements rather than create the office from nothing.

Watch next: Presentation to Governor and Governor action.

[Official status](#)

ENROLLED - SEPT. 1

AB 1641 - Tribal colleges in public higher education

Would amend California public-higher-education law to include Tribal colleges and universities geographically located in California and operated by an Indian Tribal government. If enacted, implementation questions include recognition, coordination, funding, and student pathways.

Watch next: Presentation to Governor and Governor action.

[Official status](#)

ENROLLED - AUG. 31

SB 891 - Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Justice Program

Would establish a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Justice Program within and under the discretion of the California Department of Justice, intended to support collaboration and liaison among families, Tribal governments, and law-enforcement agencies in active and inactive MMIP cases.

Watch next: Presentation to Governor and Governor action.

[Official status](#)

Cleared both houses; enrollment is the next record to watch

PASSED LEGISLATURE / ENGROSSING & ENROLLING - AUG. 30

AB 1881 - California Indian Freedom Act of 2026

The August 27 substantive repair still matters. The bill would create a state-land religious/spiritual-practice protection framework, sacred-site access and consultation duties, confidentiality protections, and a cause of action limited by the current text to California Native American tribes. Keep two dates separate: the new chapter would become operative January 1, 2028, while the definition of substantial burden reaches certain governmental actions or policies occurring on or after January 1, 2027.

Watch next: Enrollment/presentation to Governor; then Governor action by the applicable deadline.

[Official status](#)

PASSED LEGISLATURE / ENGROSSING & ENROLLING - AUG. 28

AB 1581 - AI/AN education data reporting

The earlier Tribal-affiliation collection proposal is no longer the bill. The current proposal instead requires statewide aggregate educational-outcome reporting for pupils who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native, including pupils who also identify with another race or ethnicity. Older summaries should not be reused if they still describe individual Tribal-affiliation collection as the current proposal.

Watch next: Enrollment/presentation to Governor; then Governor action.

[Official status](#)

PASSED LEGISLATURE / ENGROSSING & ENROLLING - AUG. 31

AB 1841 - Native American Day for state employees

The bill does not simply create an unconditional paid state holiday. Current text provides a Native American Day state-employee holiday upon an appropriation and also allows bargaining units to negotiate a paid holiday. The post-August-28 text should control any reused description.

Watch next: Enrollment/presentation to Governor; then Governor action.

[Official status](#)

PASSED LEGISLATURE / ENGROSSING & ENROLLING - AUG. 28

AB 1769 - Transfer pathways from Tribal colleges

Would require California State University and California Community Colleges, and request the University of California, to develop transfer agreements and articulation programs for students at California Tribal colleges, including early outreach and transfer-support tools.

Watch next: Enrollment/presentation to Governor; then Governor action.

[Official status](#)

Held this session

HELD / NOT ADVANCING THIS SESSION

SB 1326 - CEQA and Tribal cultural-resource mitigation

Would have strengthened CEQA treatment of Tribal cultural resources and mitigation. It was held in Assembly Appropriations on August 13 and remained under submission. With the August 31 passage deadline past, it should be treated as a held proposal rather than a bill moving toward enactment this session.

Watch next: No current floor path; watch for later-session return or a new measure.

[Official status](#)

Federal sidebar - Pit River Land Transfer Act

H.R. 2400 ORDERED FAVORABLY REPORTED WITH SUBSTITUTE - AUG. 5

Pit River Land Transfer Act - H.R. 2400 / S. 2871

H.R. 2400 passed the House in December 2025. The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs later ordered it favorably reported with an amendment in the nature of a substitute on August 5, 2026. No later Senate floor or enactment action was located in the September 2 sweep. It remains pending, not enacted. S. 2871 is a separate companion measure. Because the committee adopted a substitute, the House acreage should not be treated as the final Senate text until the substitute is publicly checked.

Watch next: Publication/reporting of the Senate committee substitute and further Senate action.

[Official status](#)

The next watch window: now through September 30

California's August 31 final-passage deadline has passed. For measures that cleared the Legislature, the immediate public record now moves through enrollment, presentation to the Governor, signing or veto, chaptering, and then implementation.

Now: watch enrollment and formal presentation. A bill that passed both houses is not yet a chaptered law.

Through September 30: watch Governor action on covered measures. Status can move quickly from enrolled or presented to signed/chaptered or vetoed.

After chaptering: shift from passage to effective dates, agency rules or guidance, implementation systems, funding, forms, consultation practices, and actual use.

January 1 and later: do not assume every chaptered provision becomes operative on the same date. Some measures carry distinct effective, operative, look-back, or reporting dates.

Standing laws worth keeping visible

Feather Alert. The 24-hour local-agency decision rule and Tribe-direct route to CHP remain practical safety tools under Government Code § 8594.13. The CHP report due January 1, 2027 remains an implementation checkpoint.

Indian-country crime-data disaggregation. AB 2695 (2024) requires specified incident data to be disaggregated by whether an incident occurred in Indian country. The implementation question is whether the resulting data becomes usable for MMIP and public-safety work.

Religious exercise and sacred sites. Public Resources Code § 5097.9 remains existing law; AB 1881, if enacted, would add a separate and broader state-land framework. Current law and pending legislation should not be collapsed.

Consultation and cogovernance. SB 18, AB 52, and AB 1284 remain part of the existing baseline. AB 1284's 90-day language is qualified by feasibility within existing staffing and budget and is not an unconditional command to complete an agreement within 90 days.

Sources, update practice, and release boundary

Primary legislative and governmental sources control status and bill-text statements. The September 2 refresh updates 15 legislative/federal Watch Desk tracks. Eleven inherited Long Return tracks remain visible as **Baseline refresh pending** and carry no September 2 verification date.

A later Governor signature, veto, chaptering action, federal action, material bill-text correction, or authoritative source correction should produce a dated update rather than a silent change.

Primary source routes used for the September 2 refresh

AB 2018 - Missing persons: DNA testing: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB2018

AB 31 - Tribal Police Program: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB31

AB 1824 - Indian-child guardianship and conservatorship: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB1824

AB 2187 - State contracts with California Tribes: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB2187

AB 2218 - Tribal water policy: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB2218

AB 2115 - Rowena Mae Ramos Act / formal apology: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB2115

AB 2507 - Office of Tribal Affairs: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB2507

AB 1641 - Tribal colleges in public higher education: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB1641

SB 891 - Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Justice Program:
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260SB891

AB 1881 - California Indian Freedom Act of 2026: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB1881

AB 1581 - AI/AN education data reporting: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB1581

AB 1841 - Native American Day for state employees: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB1841

AB 1769 - Transfer pathways from Tribal colleges: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB1769

SB 1326 - CEQA and Tribal cultural-resource mitigation: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260SB1326

Pit River Land Transfer Act - H.R. 2400 / S. 2871: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/2400>

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