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National Association of Voice Actors Closes Audio Loophole in California's New AI Ad Law

NAVA lobbied to remove an audio-only exemption from SB 1050, now signed into law

LOS ANGELES — September 22, 2026 — Governor Gavin Newsom signed SB 1050 on September 16, a landmark California law that requires advertisers to tell the public when an ad uses a "synthetic performer" instead of a real human performer. The law was authored by California Senate Majority Leader Angelique Ashby (D-SD 8) and sponsored by SAG-AFTRA. It takes effect January 1, 2027. The National Association of Voice Actors (NAVA) supported the bill and led the effort to make sure it covers audio-only ads, not just video or audio visual ads.

What the law does: Audio visual and audio-only ads in California that prominently includes a synthetic person or voice must clearly say so.

That wasn't always the plan. As SB 1050 moved through the Senate this spring, amendments limited it to audiovisual ads and expressly exempted audio-only advertising, leaving AI voices in radio, podcast, and streaming audio-only ads unregulated. The bill passed the Senate 38–0 with that exemption in place.

NAVA President Tim Friedlander and the NAVA team made multiple trips to the State Capitol in Sacramento to meet with legislators and make the case for voice actors and listeners. In June, the bill was amended in the Assembly to cover audio advertisements and synthetic voices.

"When I first saw the bill, I noticed there was an audio-only exemption," said Tim Friedlander, Co-Founder and President of NAVA. "An AI voice selling you a product is just as deceptive as an AI face, and voice actors are often the first performers replaced by synthetic ones. We knew that loophole had to be closed. I'm grateful Senator Ashby agreed, and proud that working voice actors now have this protection."

"SB 1050 provides important protections for the creative economy, who are the living heartbeat of California," said Senate Majority Leader Ashby. "I am proud of the sponsors and supporters of SB 1050, including NAVA, for their hard work addressing this growing issue and helping bring this important legislation across the finish line."

SB 1050 is part of NAVA's ongoing work to protect voice actors from unregulated AI at the state and federal level, including its support for the federal NO FAKES Act.

About NAVA: NAVA is a social impact non-profit association created to advocate and promote the advancement of the voice acting industry through action, education, inclusion, and benefits. NAVA is a proud Founding Member of UVA, the United Voice Artists Federation. Learn more at navavoices.org.

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