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NEWS RELEASE

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CALIFORNIA BOARD OF ACCOUNTANCY CELEBRATES 125 YEARS OF PROTECTING CONSUMERS

SACRAMENTO — 2026 marks the 125th anniversary of the founding of the California Board of Accountancy (CBA). On March 23, 1901, the California Legislature created the Board to license and regulate the young but growing public accountancy profession in the state. The CBA was originally referred to as the State Board of Accountancy, until its name was changed in 1999.

The profession has grown from 47 licensed professionals in its first year to more than 116,000 CPAs and accounting firms licensed by the CBA today. The breadth of the Board's influence in the regulatory environment stretches beyond California's borders, as many of the firms regulated by the CBA have national and even worldwide footprints.

"The CBA has provided long and valued service to the state. From our roots at the dawn of the 20th century we have evolved into regulating the largest number of licensees in the nation," said CBA President Kristian Latta, CPA.

The Legislature passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 111 to commemorate the milestone on March 12, 2026. Members and staff of the CBA and representatives from the California Society of CPAs were recognized in the Senate chamber in February when the bill was introduced by Senator Roger Niello, CPA.

For 125 years, the accountancy profession, under the oversight of the CBA, has played an important role in serving the public interest by ensuring only individuals who meet the rigorous requirements are licensed, and those licensees adhere to professional standards. Promoting integrity and objectivity builds trust in the financial systems relied upon by individuals, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and governments throughout California and the nation.

From the original licensure process of passing a CBA-created paper CPA examination (offered only certain times each year in San Francisco and Los Angeles), gaining work experience, and providing three references to one's moral character, the CBA's regulation has adapted to reflect the explosive

growth of the accounting profession into what it is now. The licensure requirements will be enhanced once again on January 1, 2027, when the provisions of Assembly Bill 1175 (Irwin, Chapter 293, Statutes of 2025) become effective. The new rules focus on the degree earned and remove the 150 total-unit requirement which often necessitated a fifth year of school, viewed by many as a barrier to entry. A second year of accounting experience is now required, with additional flexibility built in for those choosing to pursue an advanced degree or those who may be changing careers to enter the accounting profession.

The CBA's first offices were located in San Francisco, where its initial records were destroyed in the great fire of April 18, 1906. The CBA Secretary/Treasurer took on the task of recreating all of the licensure files the following year through direct correspondence with each of the original 65 licensees. In 1970, the CBA was incorporated into the newly formed Department of Consumer Affairs and was relocated to Sacramento later that decade.

The CBA's original Board consisted of five members, whereas it is now comprised of 15 members, eight public and seven licensee members. The CBA grew to its current size and became a public member majority for the first time in 2002. This public member majority ensures accountability and offers more diverse consumer-focused perspectives. CBA Executive Officer Dominic Franzella leads a staff of nearly 100 individuals to fulfill the Board's mission of consumer protection by ensuring only qualified licensees practice public accountancy in California and practice within established professional standards, a tradition the CBA has continued since 1901.

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Created by statute in 1901, the CBA's mandate requires that protection of the public shall be its highest priority in exercising licensing, regulatory, and disciplinary functions. The CBA currently regulates more than 116,000 licensees, the largest group of licensed accounting professionals in the nation, including individuals, partnerships, and corporations.

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