SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Senator Jesse Arreguín, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 2235	**Hearing Date:**	June 30, 2026
Author:	Pacheco		
Version:	April 9, 2026		
Urgency:	No	**Fiscal:**	Yes
Consultant:	NDT		

Subject: ***The Judicial Home Security Act***

HISTORY

Source: California Judges Association

Prior Legislation: AB 343 (Pacheco) Ch. 142, Stats. of 2025
AB 1785 (Pacheco) Ch. 551, Stats. of 2024

Support: Judicial Council of California

Opposition: California Assessors' Association; County Recorders Association of California

Assembly Floor Vote: 72 - 0

PURPOSE

The purpose of this bill is to create the Judicial Home Security Act, to be administered by the Attorney General, to allow judicial officers and their families to shield their home addresses from public disclosure, as provided.

Existing law provides that the people have the right of access to information concerning the conduct of the people's business, and, therefore, the meetings of public bodies and the writings of public officials and agencies are required to be open to public scrutiny. (Cal. Const., art. I, § 3(b)(1).)

Existing law requires a statute to be broadly construed if it furthers the people's right of access and narrowly construed if it limits the right of access. (Cal. Const., art. I, § 3(b)(1).)

Existing law requires a statute that limits the public's right of access to be adopted with findings demonstrating the interest protected by the limitation and the need for protecting that interest. (Cal. Const., art. I, § 3(b)(1).)

Existing law governs the disclosure of information collected and maintained by public agencies pursuant to the California Public Records Act (CPRA). (Gov. Code, §§ 792.000 et seq.)

Existing law states that, the Legislature, mindful of the right of individuals to privacy, finds and declares that access to information concerning the conduct of the people's business is a fundamental and necessary right of every person in this state. (Gov. Code, § 7921.000.)

Existing law defines "public records" as any writing containing information relating to the conduct of the public's business prepared, owned, used, or retained by any state or local agency regardless of physical form or characteristics. (Gov. Code, § 7920.530.)

Existing law defines "public agency" as any state or local agency. (Gov. Code, § 7920.525, subd. (a).)

Existing law provides that all public records are open to inspection at all times during the office hours of a state or local agency and every person has a right to inspect any public record, unless the record is exempt from public disclosure. Any reasonably segregable portion of a record shall be available for inspection by any person requesting the record after deletion of the portions that are exempted by law. (Gov. Code, § 7922.525.)

Existing law prohibits some records from being disclosed, while other records are permissively exempted from being disclosed. (See e.g. Gov. Code, §§ 7920.505 & 7922.200.)

Existing law provides that there are several general categories of documents or information that are permissively exempt from disclosure under the CPRA essentially due to the character of the information. The exempt information can be withheld by the public agency with custody of the information, but it also may be disclosed if it is shown that the public's interest in disclosure outweighs the public's interest in non-disclosure of the information. (*CBS, Inc. v. Block* (1986) 42 Cal.3d 646, at 652.).

Existing law provides that a public agency may comply with the requirements, above, by posting any public record on its website and, in response to a request for a public record posted on the website, directing a member of the public to the location on the website where the public record is posted. However, after the public agency directs a member of the public to their website, if that member of the public requests a copy of the public record due to an inability to access or reproduce the public record from the internet website, the public agency must promptly provide a copy of the public record, as specified. (Gov. Code, § 7922.545.)

Existing law prohibits a state or local agency from posting the address or telephone number of any elected or appointed official on the internet without first obtaining the written permission of the individual. (Gov. Code, § 7928.205.)

Existing law states that an "elected or appointed official" incudes, but is not limited to, all of the following: a state constitutional officer; a member of the Legislature; an active or retired judge, court commissioner, or judge of the State Bar Court; a district attorney; a public defender; a member of a city council; a member of a board of supervisors; an appointee of the Governor; an appointee of the Legislature; a mayor; a city attorney; a police chief or sheriff; a public safety official; a state administrative law judge; a federal judge or federal defender; a member of the United States Congress or appointee of the President of the United States; a judge of a federally recognized Indian tribe. (Gov. Code, § 7920.500.)

Existing law provides that for purposes of sentencing a person for a felony violation of criminal threats, the court may consider as an aggravating factor that the defendant willfully threatened to commit a crime that would result in the death or great bodily injury of a person the defendant knew to be a constitutional officer, member of the Legislature, judge, or court commissioner. (Penal Code, § 422.)

Existing law establishes an address confidentiality (or "Safe at Home") program within the Office of the Secretary of State (SOS) in order to enable state and local agencies to both accept and respond to requests for public records without disclosing the changed name or address of a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Permits any such adult victim, or parent or guardian acting on behalf of a minor or incapacitated person, to apply through a community-based victims' assistance program to have an address designated by the SOS as their substitute mailing address. (Gov. Code, §§ 6205 et seq.)

Existing law allows reproductive health care providers, employees, volunteers, and patients to apply to the address confidentiality program through a community-based victims' assistance program, as specified. (Gov. Code, § 6215 et seq.)

Existing law allows public entity employees and contractors to apply to the address confidentiality program, as provided. (*Id*.)

Existing law provides that any person who willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly follows or willfully and maliciously harasses another person and who makes a credible threat with the intent to place that person in reasonable fear for their safety, or the safety of their immediate family, is guilty of the crime of stalking, punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for not more than one year, or by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars ($1,000), or by both that fine and imprisonment, or by imprisonment in the state prison. (Pen. Code, § 646.9, subd. (a).)

Existing law provides that who falsely personates another in either their private or official capacity, and does any of the following, is guilty of the crime of false personation and cheats, punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for not more than one year, or by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars ($10,000), or by imprisonment in the county jail for 16 months, 2 years, or 3 years, or by both that fine and imprisonment.

- Becomes bail or surety for any party in any proceeding whatever, before any court or officer authorized to take that bail or surety.
- Verifies, publishes, acknowledges, or proves, in the name of another person, any written instrument, with intent that the same may be recorded, delivered, or used as true.
- Does any other act whereby, if done by the person falsely personated, they might, in any event, become liable to any suit or prosecution, or to pay any sum of money, or to incur any charge, forfeiture, or penalty, or whereby any benefit might accrue to the party personating, or to any other person. (Pen. Code, § 529.)

Existing law authorizes a court to issue civil harassment restraining orders for up to five years upon a showing of clear and convincing evidence of unlawful harassment. (Civ. Pro. Code, § 527.6, subds. (a) & (j)(1).)

Existing law provides that the order may be renewed, upon the request of a party, for a duration of no more than five additional years, without a showing of any further harassment since the issuance of the original order. (Civ. Pro. Code, § 527.6, subd. (j)(1).)

Existing law provides that every person who, having taken an oath that he or she will testify, declare, depose, or certify truly before any competent tribunal, officer, or person, in any of the cases in which the oath may by law of the State of California be administered, willfully and contrary to the oath, states as true any material matter which he or she knows to be false, and

every person who testifies, declares, deposes, or certifies under penalty of perjury in any of the cases in which the testimony, declarations, depositions, or certification is permitted by law of the State of California under penalty of perjury and willfully states as true any material matter which he or she knows to be false, is guilty of perjury. (Pen. Code, § 118, subd. (a).)

Existing law provides that any person who, in any affidavit taken before any person authorized to administer oaths, swears, affirms, declares, deposes, or certifies that they will testify, declare, depose, or certify before any competent tribunal, officer, or person, in any case then pending or thereafter to be instituted, in any particular manner, or to any particular fact, and in such affidavit willfully and contrary to such oath states as true any material matter which they know to be false, is guilty of perjury. In any prosecution, the subsequent testimony of such person, in any action involving the matters in such affidavit contained, which is contrary to any of the matters in such affidavit contained, shall be prima facie evidence that the matters in such affidavit were false. (Pen. Code, § 118a.)

Existing law makes perjury a felony, punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for two, three, or four years. (Pen. Code, § 126.)

This bill establishes the Judicial Home Security Act, to be administered by the Attorney General (AG), to allow judicial officers and their families to shield their home addresses from public disclosure.

This bill authorizes an adult person domiciled in California to apply to the AG to be accepted into the program.

- An accepted program participant may use an alternate mailing address or request shielding of public records consistent with the provisions of the bill.
- A program participant may withdraw from program participation by submitting to the AG written notification of withdrawal and the program participant's current identification card. Certification shall be terminated and notification forwarded to the appropriate state or local agency on the date of receipt of this notification.
- A program participant may update their home address or alternate mailing address in the program by submitting to the AG written notification of the same with the participant's current identification card. The AG shall issue a new identification card.
- The AG shall commence accepting applications under the program beginning on April 1, 2027.

This bill authorizes the AG to approve an application if it is filed in the manner and on the form prescribed by the AG and if it contains all of the following:

- Documentation showing that the individual is to commence employment as or is a judicial officer.
- A sworn statement that the applicant fears for their safety or the safety of their family due to their employment as a judicial officer.
    - Falsification of this sworn statement is perjury, a felony.
- The alternate mailing address requested for substitution for any reference to the person's home address. The application shall include documentation issued by the United States Postal Service or the personal mailbox rental company confirming the mailbox is rented to the applicant or a household member of the applicant. The AG shall not approve an

application if the alternate mailing address is any address other than a post office box or personal mailbox, or if it is a post office box or mailbox rented by anyone other than the applicant or a household member of the applicant.
- The telephone numbers and email addresses where the applicant can be reached by the AG.
- The home address that the applicant requests not be disclosed because disclosure will increase the risk of harassment, threats, or violence against the applicant or their family.
- The signature of the applicant under penalty of perjury and the date on which the applicant signed the application.
    - Perjury is a felony.

This bill requires the AG to issue a certified program participant documentation that they are a certified program participant, which must include, but not be limited to, both of the following:

- A program participant identification card listing their alternate mailing address; and
- A standing authorization by the AG for the program participant to use the alternate mailing address for all protections offered by the program.

This bill provides that a person who knowingly provides false or incorrect information upon making an application is guilty of a misdemeanor.

This bill authorizes the AG to terminate a program participant's certification and invalidate the program participant's authorization card for any of the reasons listed below and requires the AG to send written notification of the intended termination to the program participant. The program participant shall have 30 days in which to appeal the intended termination under procedures developed by the AG.

- The program participant has failed to pay their annual program fee. Before terminating a participant's certification due to a lapse in payment, the AG shall attempt to contact the participant by telephone and email, if available, to resolve the payment issue.
- The AG has been informed that another state agency has determined that false information was used in the application process to qualify as a program participant or that participation in the program is being used as a subterfuge to avoid detection of illegal or criminal activity or apprehension by law enforcement.
- The program participant no longer resides at the most recent home address provided to the AG and has not provided notice in writing of a change in address within 30 days of the change of their home address.
- The United States Postal Service or the personal mailbox rental company responsible for the alternate mailing address of a program participant informs the AG that the alternate mailing address is no longer rented in the name of the program participant or their household member.
- The program participant moves from their California place of residence to relocate out of state.

This bill requires the AG to create, maintain, and update monthly a list that includes certain information for each current program participant and a list for former program participants, as provided.

This bill requires state and local agencies to use a program participant's alternate mailing address for any reference to the program participant's home address when disclosing or releasing records or information that would otherwise contain the home address of a program participant in any format or medium, with certain specified exceptions.

This bill requires a county assessor's office and a county recorder office to shield the participant's public record when disclosing or releasing records or information that would otherwise contain the situs of the home address of a program participant in any format or medium, including real property deeds, real estate records, and any other records containing the home address of a program participant.

This bill requires a county assessor's office, when disclosing or releasing records or information that would otherwise contain the situs of the home address of a program participant in any format or medium, to substitute the program participant's alternate mailing address for the situs address on assessment rolls, maps, property ownership statements and records, and any other records containing the home address of a program participant.

This bill requires that the AG, state, and local agencies shall not disclose or release a program participant's home address except under specified circumstances.

This bill prohibits a person or organization from publicly posting or displaying the home address of a program participant who has made a written demand of the person or organization.

COMMENTS

1. Need for This Bill

According to the author:

> Violence and threats against judges have risen sharply, with thousands of incidents reported in recent years and a dramatic increase since 2015, leaving many judges and their families fearing for their safety. At the same time, judicial officers' home addresses remain easily accessible through public records and online databases, creating a direct pathway for bad actors to locate them and their families. Existing privacy protections in California are insufficient, as they do not effectively prevent the widespread dissemination of this sensitive information, especially when it originates from government sources. This gap leaves judges uniquely exposed to targeted harassment, intimidation, and potential violence at their homes.
>
> AB 2235, the Judicial Home Security Act, addresses this urgent risk by allowing judges to use an alternate mailing address in public records while preserving legitimate access for business, legal, and law enforcement purposes. By replacing home addresses, the bill strikes a careful balance between transparency and safety, ensuring public records remain functional without compromising personal security. In light of the escalating threats and clear vulnerabilities, AB 2235 is a necessary and measured step to protect the judiciary and uphold the integrity of the justice system.

2. Civil Harassment Restraining Orders

Civil harassment restraining orders may be issued when an individual has suffered harassment. (Code of Civ. Pro., § 527.6, subd. (a)(1).) Harassment is unlawful violence, a credible threat of violence, or a knowing and willful course of conduct directed at a specific person that seriously alarms, annoys, or harasses the person, and that serves no legitimate purpose. The course of conduct must be that which would cause a reasonable person to suffer substantial emotional distress and must actually cause substantial emotional distress to the petitioner. (Code of Civ. Pro., § 527.6, subd. (b)(3).) A person may be the subject of a restraining order even if they are not facing a criminal charge and are never convicted of any criminal act. Simple violation of a restraining order is a misdemeanor. (See Pen. Code, § 166, subd. (a)(4); Pen. Code, § 273.6, subd. (a).)

3. Safe at Home

Safe at Home is a confidential address program administered by the SOS. It offers a substitute mailing address to receive mail at for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, child abduction, and elder or dependent adult abuse, as well as reproductive health care workers and public entity employees who are in fear for their safety.[1] This address is accepted by state, county, and city government agencies in lieu of a residential or other mailing address where a victim can be tracked down, keeping the residence address confidential and out of the hands of someone who might want to harm the victim.

4. Perjury

Perjury occurs when a person, having taken an oath that they will speak honestly before a tribunal, officer, or person, states as true any material matter which they know to be false. (Pen. Code, § 118, subd. (a).) Perjury applies not only to the described testimony but also to written sworn affidavits. (Pen. Code, § 118a.) It is a felony punishable by two, three, or four years of imprisonment in a county jail. (Pen. Code, § 126.)

It is not a defense to perjury that the person accused was not competent to give the testimony of which the falsehood is alleged. (Pen. Code, § 122.) It is also not a defense to perjury that the person accused did not know the materiality of the false statement or did not know the effect that the false statement could have. (Pen. Code, § 123.) A person cannot be convicted of perjury if the proof of their perjury rests solely upon the testimony of one other person. (Pen. Code, § 118, subd. (b).)

5. Enhanced Sentencing and Deterrence

Research shows that increasing the severity of punishment does little to deter crime. According to the National Institute of Justice, an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, "[l]aws and policies designed to deter crime by focusing mainly on increasing the severity of punishment are ineffective partly because criminals know little about the sanctions for specific crimes. More severe punishments do not 'chasten' individuals convicted of crimes, and prisons may exacerbate recidivism… Studies show that for most individuals convicted of a crime, short to moderate

[1] AB 82 (Ward) Ch. 679, Stats. of 2025.

prison sentences may be a deterrent but longer prison terms produce only a limited deterrent effect. In addition, the crime prevention benefit falls far short of the social and economic costs."[2]

6. Proposed Amendments

Due to the timing of this bill's presentation, this committee will take amendments proposed by the Senate Committee on Judiciary. Those amendments would:

- Define "shielding."
- Require that the home address of an accepted program participant be substituted with an alternate mailing address.
- Allow the accepted program participant to request shielding of public records by notifying the Assess and Recorder.
- Provide that a request for shielding must include either the alternate mailing address requested for substitution for any reference to the person's home address or a request for shielding public records, including a list of all document types, recording numbers, and assessor parcel numbers the judicial officer wishes to shield.
- Require the AG to issue a certified program participant documentation that they are a program participant including a standing authorization by the AG for the program participant to request shielding of public records where the home address is contained.
- Allow a program participant to withdraw from program participation by submitting to the AG written notification of withdrawal and the program participant's current identification card. Require certification be terminated and notification forwarded to the appropriate state or local agency on the date of receipt of this notification.
- Require that the AG create a list of former program participants that shall be publicly available.
- Require that when disclosing or releasing records, as specified, a county assessor's office must substitute the addresses, as specified.
- Require that a county assessor's office and a county recorder's office shield a participant's public records, including real property deeds, real estate records, and any other records showing the home address of the program participant, if the request for shielding contains specified information, including a sworn statement attesting to the accuracy of the information provided.
    - Falsification of a sworn statement is perjury, a felony.
- Require that the recorder and assessor be deemed to be in compliance with the requirements of the bill and not be liable for failure to shield a program participant's home address or public records if the participant fails to comply with program requirements.
- Require that upon receipt of a request for shielding, the Recorder and Assessor must validate and shield the requested records within 5 business days.
- Provide that third-party data broker or aggregator shall not sell, license, trade, purchase, transfer, release, or otherwise share in any format or medium the home address of a program participant, including on the internet, unless such sale, license, trade, purchase, transfer, release, or other sharing is authorized under the California Consumer Privacy Act.

[2] National Institute of Justice (May 2016). *Five Things about Deterrence* https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/247350.pdf

7. Effect of This Bill

This bill seeks to establish a way for judicial officers to shield their home addresses in public documents. The bill establishes the program in the AG's Office, instead of in the SOS's Office like the Safe At Home Program. The author argues this program is different and therefore more appropriately placed in the AG's office because it allows for shielding of a person's address by state and local agencies, including country recorders and assessors. The bill provides several exceptions for accessing or publicly posting the address of a program participant, such as if requested by a law enforcement agency or under certain federal laws.

Civil harassment restraining orders are the main mechanism used to reduce unlawful harassment. This bill may reduce the need for civil harassment restraining orders, or other kinds of criminal protective orders, as individuals wishing to harm judges may have a harder time harassing judges without information about their whereabouts.

This bill, as proposed to be amended, creates three felonies and one misdemeanor. A judge must sign a sworn statement, triggering penalty of perjury; the applicant – who may be the judge or may be a member of the judge's household – must sign under penalty of perjury; the application if falsified carries a misdemeanor penalty; and a person requesting shielding to a county assessor's office or county recorder office must sign a sworn statement, triggering penalty of perjury. As written, if one person fraudulently files an application, that person may accrue two felonies and one misdemeanor. Perjury carries a sentence of up to four years of incarceration in a county jail. Additionally, because it is already a crime to impersonate a judge when signing under penalty of perjury, this bill may carry additional felony consequences. (Pen. Code, § 529, subd. (a)(2).)

There is a public interest in maintaining some incentive for these applications not to be falsified; however, stronger punishments do not translate to increased deterrence. The Committee may wish to consider amending this bill, such that only one crime is committed if an application is fraudulently submitted. As for the sworn statement a request for shielding to a county assessor's office or a county recorder office contains, the Committee may consider assessing a civil fine or misdemeanor for falsifying a request. The Committee may wish to consider if other crimes, such as impersonating a judge, may already punish the conduct described in this bill. If the Committee keeps all perjury offenses, the Committee may wish to consider standardizing the perjury language in the bill; the bill uses either "penalty of perjury" or "sworn affidavit," indicating the same crime but with different language.

8. Argument in Support

According to the Judicial Council of California:

> Modeled after California's Safe at Home Program, AB 2235 would authorize judicial officers to use an alternate P.O. box or personal mailbox in place of their home address in public records, including by the County Assessor and Recorder offices as a substitute for the program participant's situs address on real property deeds, real estate records, and any other records containing the home address of a program participant.
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> Assembly Bill 2235 promotes the safety and security of judges, which is a key legislative priority for the Judicial Council. Threats against judges appear to be increasing and there have been a number of high-profile incidents of violence

against judges in other states that have made judges in California fear for their safety. That fear impinges on their ability to function with independence. AB 2235 is a narrowly tailored solution that will offer protection for judges, including federal judges, tribal judges, court commissioners, as well as former judges, in a manner similar to existing programs operated by the Secretary of State which protect victims of domestic violence as well as health care providers who have been targeted for providing abortions or gender affirming care.

9. Argument in Opposition

According to the County Recorders' Association of California:

> While we support efforts to safeguard personal information and understand the intent of creating a system that seeks to protect members of the public and government officials, we believe this language presents administrative concerns and lacks clarity on the proposed program and processes. County recorders serve primarily as administrators of critical public records systems, and even minor disruptions to established administrative processes can create cascading impacts for our offices, stakeholders, and the public. It is essential that implementation includes a process that minimizes operational disruptions and reduces public confusion.
>
> The County Recorders' Association of California greatly appreciates the collaboration and work done thus far with the author's office and sponsors of AB 2235 over the past several years. Through those conversations, we have shared amendments with both parties that we would respectfully request be taken into consideration. Those amendments do the following:
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> - Provides an alternate method of shielding for which recorder offices will shield public records containing the participants home address.
> - Specifies that the individual may apply to the AG to be accepted into the Judicial Home Security Program and upon receiving approval, participant must notify the county recorder of the document types they would like shielded, among providing identification and proof of authorization.
> - Clarifies that for the purposes of not disrupting critical services such as real estate transactions, estate planning, legal reasons, etc., requestors must sign under penalty of perjury to view non-shielded documents as to not disrupt the real estate transaction processes.
> - Adds that the program participant can withdraw from the program and would have to notify the government agency along with the document types that were previously shielded.
> - Adds a County Board of Supervisors approved fee for recovery of costs incurred to implement this program.
> - Provides indemnification clause.
>
> It is because of the administrative concerns expressed above that we have respectfully **taken an "oppose unless amended" position on AB 2235.**

-- END --