
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Senator Loni Hancock, Chair

2015 - 2016 Regular

Bill No: AB 222 **Hearing Date:** June 9, 2015
Author: Achadjian
Version: March 23, 2015
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: MK

Subject: *Vehicle Records: Confidential Home Address*

HISTORY

Source: California Association of Psychiatric Technicians

Prior Legislation: SB 767 (Lieu) (as amended in the Assembly) failed Assembly Transportation, 2014
AB 2687 (Bocanegra) Chapter 273, Stats. 2014
AB 1270 (Eggman) – failed Assembly Appropriations, 2013
AB 923 (Swanson) – failed Assembly Appropriations, 2009
AB 529 (Lowenthal) – failed Assembly Appropriations, 2009
AB 1958 (Swanson) – failed Assembly Appropriations, 2008
AB 1311 (Berryhill) – not heard Assembly Transportation, 2007
AB 1706 (Strickland) – failed Assembly Transportation, 2005
AB 2012 (Chu) – section amended out of the bill, 2004
AB 130 (Campbell) – not heard Assembly Transportation, 2003
AB 246 (Cox) – not heard Assembly Transportation, 2003
AB 1775 (Ortiz) – no vote in Senate Public Safety, 2002
AB 84 (Hertzberg) – Ch. 809, Stats. 2001
AB 1029 (Oropeza) – Ch. 486, Stats. 2001
AB 151 (Longville) – vetoed, 2000
AB 298 (Battin) – held in Assembly Transportation, 2000
AB 1310 (Granlund) – vetoed, 2000
AB 1358 (Shelley) – Ch. 808, Stats. 2000
AB 1864 (Correa) – held Assembly Appropriations, 2000
SB 171 (Knight) – vetoed, 1998
AB 1941 (Bordonaro) – Ch. 880, Stats. 1996
AB 191(Cannella) – died in Sen. Committee on Criminal Procedure, 1996
AB 3033 (Baca) – died in Sen. Committee on Criminal Procedure, 1996
AB 3391 (Ducheny) – never heard, 1996
AB 688 (Frusetta) – died in Sen. Committee on Criminal Procedure, 1996
AB 1396 (Poochigian) – died in Sen. Committee on Criminal Procedure, 1996
AB 1931 (Conroy) – Ch. 77, Stats. 1994
AB 3454 (Speier) – Ch. 395, Stats. 1994
AB 3161 (Frazee) – Ch. 838, Stats. 1994
AB 1268 (Martinez) – Ch. 1268, Stats. 1993
AB 2367 (Polanco) – Ch. 1291, Stats. 1993
SB 274 (Committee on Transportation) – Ch. 1292, Stats. 1993

SB 602 (1992) – Chaptered
AB 1779 (1989) – Chaptered

Support: California College and University Police Chiefs

Opposition: None known

Assembly Floor Vote: 77 - 0

PURPOSE

The purpose of this bill is to add specified employees of state hospitals and the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to those who may request an additional level of confidentiality from the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Under existing law the residential addresses of certain public employees and their families are confidential. (Vehicle Code §§ 1808.4 and 1808.6 - began in 1977.)

Existing law states that all residence addresses in any record of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) are confidential and shall not be disclosed to any person, except a court, law enforcement agency, or other governmental agency, or as authorized in section 1808.22 of the Vehicle Code. (Vehicle Code §§ 1808.21 - added in 1989.)

Existing law states that any person may seek suppression of any DMV registration or driver's license record if he or she can show that he or she is the subject of stalking or a threat of death or great bodily injury. The suppression will be for a period of one year renewable for two more one year periods. (Vehicle Code § 1808.21(d).)

Existing law provides that the home address of specified persons which appear in the records of DMV is confidential upon the request of the person and that it not be disclosed except as specified. (Vehicle Code §§ 1808.4 and 1808.6.)

Existing law provides that the willful, unauthorized disclosure of this information as it relates to specified law enforcement (peace officers, employees of city police departments, and county sheriffs' offices and their families) that results in the bodily injury to the individual or individuals whose specified information was confidential, is a felony. (Vehicle Code §§ 1808.4.)

Existing law provides that the release of such confidential information, for all other persons specified, is a misdemeanor and punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000 and/or by up to one year in a county jail. (Vehicle Code § 1808.45.)

This bill would add the following officers and employees with the Department of State Hospitals and the CDCR: prelicensed psychiatric technician; psychiatric technician; senior psychiatric technician; nurse practitioner; health services specialist and program director-medical, to those who can request an additional layer of confidentiality from the DMV.

RECEIVERSHIP/OVERCROWDING CRISIS AGGRAVATION

For the past eight years, this Committee has scrutinized legislation referred to its jurisdiction for any potential impact on prison overcrowding. Mindful of the United States Supreme Court ruling and federal court orders relating to the state's ability to provide a constitutional level of health care to its inmate population and the related issue of prison overcrowding, this Committee has applied its "ROCA" policy as a content-neutral, provisional measure necessary to ensure that the Legislature does not erode progress in reducing prison overcrowding.

On February 10, 2014, the federal court ordered California to reduce its in-state adult institution population to 137.5% of design capacity by February 28, 2016, as follows:

- 143% of design bed capacity by June 30, 2014;
- 141.5% of design bed capacity by February 28, 2015; and,
- 137.5% of design bed capacity by February 28, 2016.

In February of this year the administration reported that as "of February 11, 2015, 112,993 inmates were housed in the State's 34 adult institutions, which amounts to 136.6% of design bed capacity, and 8,828 inmates were housed in out-of-state facilities. This current population is now below the court-ordered reduction to 137.5% of design bed capacity." (Defendants' February 2015 Status Report In Response To February 10, 2014 Order, 2:90-cv-00520 KJM DAD PC, 3-Judge Court, *Coleman v. Brown, Plata v. Brown* (fn. omitted).

While significant gains have been made in reducing the prison population, the state now must stabilize these advances and demonstrate to the federal court that California has in place the "durable solution" to prison overcrowding "consistently demanded" by the court. (Opinion Re: Order Granting in Part and Denying in Part Defendants' Request For Extension of December 31, 2013 Deadline, NO. 2:90-cv-0520 LKK DAD (PC), 3-Judge Court, *Coleman v. Brown, Plata v. Brown* (2-10-14). The Committee's consideration of bills that may impact the prison population therefore will be informed by the following questions:

- Whether a proposal erodes a measure which has contributed to reducing the prison population;
- Whether a proposal addresses a major area of public safety or criminal activity for which there is no other reasonable, appropriate remedy;
- Whether a proposal addresses a crime which is directly dangerous to the physical safety of others for which there is no other reasonably appropriate sanction;
- Whether a proposal corrects a constitutional problem or legislative drafting error; and
- Whether a proposal proposes penalties which are proportionate, and cannot be achieved through any other reasonably appropriate remedy.

COMMENTS

1. Need for This Bill

According to the author:

AB 222 would add psychiatric technicians at the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and at the Department of State Hospitals (DSH) to the list of professions eligible for enhanced confidentiality of home address information stored by the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Psychiatric Technicians are the largest classification of direct level of care providers at DHS, which currently operates five state hospitals, and CDCR which operates 33 prisons throughout California.

Currently, nearly every employee classification employed by CDCR is eligible for enhanced confidentiality at DMV with the exception of psychiatric technicians. Furthermore, SDH treats many of the same serious and violent offenders at its facilities, including Sexually Violent Predators at Coalinga State Hospital.

2. Background of DMV Confidentiality

Vehicle Code section 1808.4 was added by statute in 1977 to provide confidentiality of home addresses to specified public employees and their families.

In 1989, Vehicle Code section 1808.21 was added to make all residence addresses contained within the Department of Motor Vehicle files confidential. Vehicle Code section 1808.21(a) states the following:

The residence address in any record of the department is confidential and cannot be disclosed to any person except a court, law enforcement agency, or other governmental agency, or as authorized in Section 1808.22 or 1808.23.

This section was further amended in 1994 to allow individuals under specific circumstances to request that their entire records be suppressed. Any individual who is the subject of stalking or who is experiencing a threat of death or great bodily injury to his or her person may request their entire record to be suppressed under this section.

Upon suppression of a record, each request for information about that record has to be authorized by the subject of the record or verified as legitimate by other investigative means by the DMV before the information is released.

A record is suppressed for a one-year period. At the end of the one year period, the suppression is continued for a period determined by the department and if the person submits verification acceptable to the department that he or she continues to have reasonable cause to believe that he or she is the subject of stalking or that there exists a threat of death or great bodily injury to his or her person.

DMV has long maintained that all residence addresses are suppressed and only persons authorized by statute can access this information.

Under sections 1808.4 and 1808.6 the home addresses of specific individuals are suppressed and can only be accessed through the Confidential Records Unit of the Department of Motor Vehicles while under section 1808.21, the residence address portion of all individuals' records are suppressed but can be accessed by a court, law enforcement agency, or other governmental agency or other authorized persons.

3. The Department of Motor Vehicles

There have been a number of bills adding or attempting to add various public employees to the enhanced confidentiality provisions of the Vehicle Code.

According to a Senate Committee on Public Safety analysis for June 11, 1996 of AB 1941 (Bordonaro):

According to a letter dated June 9, 1995 from the Department of Motor Vehicles concerning related measures initially set for hearing last year (AB 191, AB 688, AB 1396) on this issue, AB 1941 "is just one of four bills slated for the Criminal Procedure Committee hearing on June 13 which seek to include various professions within the category of confidential records that have historically been reserved for law enforcement personnel. When names are added to this special category, they cannot be accessed except through a telephone procedure utilized in one particular file security area in the DMV's Sacramento headquarters location. Currently, we estimate that this file contains close to half a million individual records which must be manually entered and individually retrieved when access is authorized.

The DMV has stated that approximately 1000 requests for confidentiality of home addresses are made each week. The Confidential Records Unit of the DMV consists of 12 people and only two of these people review these forms to determine whether the individuals requesting confidentiality are in fact qualified to do so.

According to the DMV, a majority of these requests are granted due to the fact that the DMV restricts the release of the request forms to qualifying agencies and individuals only. The Confidential Records Unit of the DMV updated "5900 records in May 1995 and only 273 applications were rejected."

4. Adding Psychiatric Technicians and Other State Hospital and CDCR Employees

This bill would add the following officers and employees with the Department of State Hospitals and the CDCR: prelicensed psychiatric technician; psychiatric technician; senior psychiatric technician; nurse practitioner; health services specialist and program director-medical to the provision that suppresses residence information that can only then be accessed by the Confidential Records Unit.

The sponsor notes that:

Many psych techs have been threatened and even stalked by paroling inmates and discharged patients. In several cases, the inmate/patients were able to obtain the psych techs home address. This bill provides an extra level of protection to our members from being stalked or harmed by paroled inmates or released patients with a history of mental illness.

In spite of the legitimate concerns about the safety of these state employees, since a member of the public can *never* access anyone's information from DMV, is the expansion of those in the additional suppression section, which adds to the workload of DMV, necessary?

5. Similar Legislation

SB 372 (Galgiani) which passed this Committee on April 28, 2015 was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee. That bill would have added code enforcement officers, parking control officers, non-sworn investigators with the Department of Insurance (DOI), and the spouses and children of these persons to the list of persons who may request an additional level of confidentiality from the Department of Motor Vehicles. The Senate Appropriations Committee analysis notes:

- To the extent up to 6,500 code enforcement officers, DOI investigators, parking control officers, and their family members could apply in the first year and/or annually thereafter, accounting for changes to vehicle ownership, the DMV would incur additional staffing costs to process these applications as the system is administered manually, including a significant portion requiring follow-up inquiries. First-year costs are estimated at about \$350,000 and ongoing costs of \$85,000 (Motor Vehicle Account Special Fund)
- Potential reduction in state and local tolls, parking fees, and fines to the extent that current law makes it difficult for local parking and toll agencies to collect tolls and fines from additional persons protected by the enhanced confidentiality statutes.

6. San Diego Union Tribune Editorial

An editorial by Steven Greenhut in the San Diego Union Tribune discussing this bill and SB 372(Galgiani) pointed to a history of questions raised by the expanded confidentiality program and whether either bill is even necessary:

Seven years ago, a newspaper investigation found that a little-known state program designed to protect police and judges from the public disclosure of their home addresses had expanded into a massive database of 1.5 million public employees and their family members, few of whom face any on-the-job dangers to merit the protection.

Because of this Confidential Records Program, "Vehicles with protected license plates can run through dozens of intersections controlled by red light cameras and breeze along the 91 toll lanes with impunity," according to the Orange County Register report. They evade parking citations and even get out of speeding tickets because police officers realize "the drivers are 'one of their own' or related to someone who is."

The whole purpose of the confidential database has long been deemed irrelevant. “State law now bars the DMV from disclosing home addresses for any of its licensees to anyone except for those with legitimate business reasons like financial institutions, insurance companies and toll-road agencies,” reported the Sacramento Bee in a 2010 editorial. The newspaper called on the state to dump this list for “privileged” workers and their kin (Greenhut, Steven, “Growing List Let Workers Snub Traffic Laws” San Diego Union Tribune May 11, 2015 <http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2015/may/11/legislature-state-workers-confidential-licenses/all/?print>)

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