

Date of Hearing: April 24, 2024

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 2985 (Hart) – As Amended April 10, 2024

Policy Committee:	Public Safety	Vote:	8 - 0
	Judiciary		12 - 0

Urgency: No      State Mandated Local Program: No      Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill requires a court to provide jurors serving on a case that involves a violent felony with information about mental health services.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

Ongoing costs (Trial Court Trust Fund), of an unknown but likely moderate amount, to Judicial Council to provide its existing mental health materials to applicable jurors. Judicial Council expects annual, ongoing printing and distribution costs of approximately \$100,000.

**COMMENTS:**

1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

AB 2985 aims to support jurors who have served on violent felony trials by providing them with information about mental health awareness, secondary trauma, and healthy coping mechanisms to stay well following their service. This bill aims to help improve the experience for jurors, recognizing that jurors will be more likely to serve if they feel that the system cares about their needs. This measure will ensure that important information gets into the hands of jurors who need it, without requiring significant additional funding. AB 2985 installs safeguards to provide California jurors with mental health awareness and support after they fulfill their civic duty of serving on a jury.

2) **Background.** Jury service is obligatory for most adult citizens, but it can be a heavy burden. In addition to disrupting a juror's daily life and work, participating in a jury trial for a violent offense can expose a juror to graphic and traumatic images, video, and testimony. This bill requires a court to provide jurors who participated in a trial related to a violent felony – including alternate jurors who sat through the trial but did not participate in rendering a verdict – with written information about mental health awareness, including information about stress relief and symptoms that may be experienced following exposure to trauma. The bill also permits, but does not require, a court to provide such information to jurors and alternate jurors who participate in criminal trials or proceedings related to lesser offenses.

**Analysis Prepared by:** Annika Carlson / APPR. / (916) 319-2081