

Date of Hearing: January 22, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1359 (Ahrens) – As Amended January 5, 2026

Policy Committee: Judiciary

Vote: 11 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY: This bill authorizes potential jurors who are at least 80 years old to opt out of jury service without providing supporting documentation. The bill also authorizes Judicial Council to adopt or amend relevant rules of court and judicial forms.

FISCAL EFFECT: The Judicial Council estimates a minor and absorbable impact to create or update a Rule of Court. The Judicial Council notes it needs a one-year delayed implementation to allow for the approval process and public comment periods. The courts have identified a rough estimate of up to \$350,000 in one-time costs associated with jury management system upgrades that would need to be performed as well as minor and absorbable cost for Judicial Council staff to create model summons that reflect the change in policy. The Judicial Council notes unknown, potentially moderate costs associated with mailing additional juror summons as responses to the exempted individuals are received. There may be potential cost savings for reduced Judicial Council staff time in processing excusal requests and documentation on a case-by-case basis, as permitted under existing law. Judicial council and courts do not have juror demographic data in their jury management systems and the potential impact on the juror rolls is unknown.

COMMENTS: Existing law generally prohibits the exemption of eligible jurors from jury service but permits that eligible jurors may be excused on a case-by-case basis for undue hardship. The Rules of Court allow for such an excusal without verification of the condition, such as medical documentation, so long as the person is at least 70 years old. Existing law also allows a prospective juror to seek a permanent excusal from jury service if they have a medical condition that is unlikely to resolve for the foreseeable future, but this permanent excusal requires a written request and supporting documentation. This documentation requirement applies regardless of age. This bill would authorize anyone 80 years old and over to opt in for a permanent exemption, regardless of undue hardship, without providing any supporting documentation. The author notes that scheduling an appointment with a doctor, attaining a note with the necessary information, and transmitting it to the court can be a costly and burdensome process for older adults who may struggle to care for themselves.

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