

## CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 1525 (Committee on Judiciary)

As Amended September 4, 2025

Majority vote

**SUMMARY**

*Clarifies the disciplinary rules for attorneys providing advice related to sensitive services, and provides that a California attorney cannot be disciplined for providing accurate legal advice about the provision of sensitive services in California.*

*Major Provisions*

- 1) Defines for the purpose of 2) through 4) the following:*
  - a) "Attorney" means an attorney admitted to practice law in this state;*
  - b) "Applicant" means an applicant for admission to practice law in this state;*
  - c) "Sensitive Services" means all health care services related to mental or behavioral health, sexual and reproductive health, sexually transmitted infections, substance use disorder, gender-affirming care, and intimate partner violence, obtained by a patient at or above the minimum age specified for consenting to the service, as specified; and*
  - d) "Excluded event" means the entry of a judgment, imposition of sanctions, filing of an indictment or criminal charges or implementation of professional discipline against an attorney or applicant that is based on the application of another state's law that interferes with any person's right to receive, provide, recommend, enable, or advocate for sensitive services that would be lawful in this state, regardless of the location in which the event takes place and regardless of the location of the attorney or applicant.*
- 2) Prohibits an excluded event from being grounds for suspension, disbarment, or other disciplinary action.*
- 3) Provides that no attorney or applicant is required to report the excluded event to the State Bar, supply evidence that an attorney is culpable of professional misconduct in this state, and that an excluded event cannot serve as grounds to deny admission for any applicant for admission to practice law.*
- 4) Provides that the provisions of 1) through 3) do not apply to events that would subject an attorney or applicant to a similar claim, charge, or action under the laws of this state.*

**Senate Amendments**

*Delete the contents of the bill and add provisions of AB 1522 (Committee on Judiciary) which was previously approved by the Assembly.*

**COMMENTS**

*Following the United States Supreme Court's overturning of constitutional protections to abortion services (Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization (2021) 597 U.S. 215), a*

*number of states have enacted draconian criminal and civil statutes targeting those who assist women in need of abortion services. For example, following the enactment of the Texas' civilly enforced "fetal heartbeat" law that targets those who "aid and abet" a person seeking an abortion (Texas Health and Safety Code Section 171.208), several Texas law firms were targeted by the state legislature and the state's Attorney General. For example, after the law firm of Sidley Austin, LLP offered staff in its Houston and Dallas offices time off to seek reproductive healthcare services, the Freedom Caucus of the Texas Legislature threatened to sue the firm under the fetal heartbeat law. (Jacqueline Thomsen, Texas lawmakers target law firms for aiding abortion access, Reuters (July 8, 2022) available at:*

*<https://www.reuters.com/legal/legalindustry/texas-lawmakers-target-law-firms-aiding-abortion-access-2022-07-08/>.) Similar threats were made against other large law firms, including Vinson & Elkins; Morgan, Lewis & Bockius; and McDermott, Will & Emery. (Ibid.)*

*Under existing California law (Business and Professions Code Section 606877(o)), an attorney is required to notify the State Bar of California of criminal and civil charges files against the attorney in another jurisdiction, as well as any professional misconduct charges levied against the attorney by a sister state's regulatory body. Although it does not appear that any lawsuits or criminal charges were ever filed against the Texas firms, or their managing partners, should such actions have taken place, and if those attorneys were simultaneously licensed in California, the attorneys would have a duty to report the information to the State Bar, which would then be obligated to investigate.*

*Recognizing that the actions of these Texas law firms and their senior managing attorneys are wholly legal in California, this bill seeks to protect California licensed attorneys from discipline in this state for their actions in another state related to sensitive services that are legal in California, if another jurisdiction seeks to discipline the attorney. Building on existing protections for medical professionals offering sensitive services, this bill provides that an attorney is not obligated to inform the State Bar of out-of-state charges related to legal advice provided, or other actions taken, related to the provision of sensitive services that are legal in California. The bill clarifies that even if the State Bar learns of such discipline, the State Bar is precluded from taking action, unless the claim would be sustainable under California law. These provisions should protect California attorneys who provide valid legal advice regarding the laws of this state and ensure that the State Bar is not forced to utilize its limited resources pursuing claims that lack merit under California law.*

#### **According to the Author**

*As a new administration has taken hold in Washington, dedicated legal professionals are finding themselves targeted for retaliation, retribution, and job losses. This bill protects California attorneys who provide legitimate legal advice to clients even if another jurisdiction believes such advice violates laws preventing a person from assisting another in seeking specified medical care. This proposal will strengthen and protect the legal profession in California from attacks from outside of the state.*

#### **Arguments in Support**

*None on file*

#### **Arguments in Opposition**

*None on file*

**FISCAL COMMENTS**

None

**VOTES:****ASM JUDICIARY: 12-0-0**

**YES:** Kalra, Dixon, Bauer-Kahan, Bryan, Connolly, Harabedian, Macedo, Pacheco, Lee, Sanchez, Stefani, Zbur

**ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 76-0-3**

**YES:** Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Flora, Krell, Sanchez

**UPDATED**

VERSION: September 4, 2025

CONSULTANT: Nicholas Liedtke / JUD. / (916) 319-2334

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