

Date of Hearing: April 29, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1537 (Bryan) – As Introduced January 5, 2026

Policy Committee: Public Safety

Vote: 5 - 3

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill prohibits a California peace officer from engaging in any form of secondary employment — including casual, part-time, contract-based, independent contractor, or volunteer work — for the United States Department of Homeland Security, its contractors, or any other entity that assists with or engages in immigration enforcement, as defined. The bill makes all records related to peace officer secondary employment public records under the California Public Records Act.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Provides that a violation of the secondary employment prohibition is an act of dishonesty and constitutes grounds for decertification by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).
- 2) Requires a peace officer to report to their employing law enforcement agency any offer of, request for, or attempt at secondary employment that involves assisting with or engaging in immigration enforcement.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Ongoing costs (General Fund) likely in the low-to-mid millions of dollars annually across state law enforcement agencies to centralize, monitor, and verify peace officer secondary employment; to respond to California Public Records Act (CPRA) requests for secondary employment records newly designated as public; and to investigate and enforce potential violations. Agencies have reported the following:
 - a) The Department of Parks and Recreation has identified the need for one additional law enforcement position and vehicle, at approximately \$374,000 in the first year and \$253,000 ongoing, to centralize verification and investigation of secondary employment across its 21 districts.
 - b) The California Highway Patrol maintains secondary employment records in paper form at 103 area offices, nine field division offices, headquarters commands, and the academy. Compliance with the bill's CPRA disclosure requirement would require manual review of over 7,000 personnel files, with associated administrative staff time and resources.
 - c) The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has described potential costs as unknown but potentially significant, reflecting the need for new statewide

processes, dedicated staff for verification and monitoring, and manual review of both departmental and contracted employee records.

- d) POST reports no additional fiscal impact to its decertification workload under current assumptions.

Aggregate state costs scale with the number of state agencies employing peace officers — which includes, in addition to those above, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, CAL FIRE, State Lands Commission, the Department of Justice, the University of California and California State University police departments, and others.

- 2) Likely reimbursable costs (local funds, General Fund) of an unknown but potentially significant amount to local law enforcement agencies to implement parallel verification, monitoring, and CPRA compliance requirements across approximately 500 local law enforcement agencies and approximately 80,000 local peace officers statewide. General Fund costs will depend on whether the duties imposed by this bill constitute a reimbursable state mandate, as determined by the Commission on State Mandates.
- 3) Unknown Attorney General costs (General Fund) for potential constitutional challenges to the prohibition as applied to peace officer employment with federal agencies and their contractors.

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year beginning in the 2027-28 fiscal year.

COMMENTS:

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

Nearly a decade ago, California took a stand and explicitly prohibited collaboration between our State and federal immigration enforcement. But our law currently has a harmful loophole that allows police officers to moonlight with ICE. AB 1537 is straightforward. If your day job is to serve our communities, you should not be off the clock terrorizing those very same communities as an ICE agent.

- 2) **Background.** Existing law generally permits peace officer secondary employment, subject to specified restrictions and approvals by employing agencies. SB 54 (De León, Chapter 495, Statutes 2017) (known as the Values Act), restricts the use of state and local law enforcement resources for immigration enforcement purposes. This bill extends the SB 54 principle to peace officers' secondary employment, prohibiting peace officers from engaging in such work for DHS, its contractors, or any other entity that assists with or engages in immigration enforcement — including in a volunteer capacity — and making violations grounds for POST decertification. Existing law generally prohibits state and local employees from engaging in secondary employment that is incompatible with their official duties, and the Values Act's existing restrictions may already prohibit some forms of peace officer secondary employment with immigration enforcement entities through the general prohibition on using agency resources for immigration enforcement. This bill creates an

explicit statutory prohibition rather than relying on the indirect application of existing restrictions.

The bill's prohibition is broad. DHS is an umbrella agency encompassing 16 component agencies, only some of which engage primarily in immigration enforcement. As policy committee staff and agency responses have noted, the prohibition as drafted reaches the United States Coast Guard, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers, Transportation Security Administration, and other DHS components whose connection to immigration enforcement is limited or attenuated. Multiple state agencies have identified current employees who are affected as drafted, including peace officers serving as Coast Guard reservists and peace officers who coordinate with DHS as part of their primary state duties. The breadth of the prohibition is a primary driver of implementation and compliance costs across state and local agencies.

The bill designates all peace officer secondary employment records as public records under the California Public Records Act. Agency responses to this requirement vary: some indicate that secondary employment records are generally maintained locally in decentralized, often paper-based, systems and would be costly to centralize, while others report that any CPRA requests could be handled by existing staff.

Because the prohibition is directed at California-licensed peace officers rather than at federal agencies directly, the bill operates within the space California has under the anticommandeering doctrine to regulate its own employees and licensees. As applied to employment with federal agencies and their contractors, the prohibition may face supremacy clause or intergovernmental immunity challenges. The policy committee has recommended consideration of a severability clause.

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