
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 1609 (Zbur) - Customer service chatbots

Version: June 25, 2026

Policy Vote: P., D.T., & C.P. 7 - 0, JUD.
11 - 1

Urgency: No

Mandate: No

Hearing Date: August 13, 2026

Consultant: Bob Franzoia

Bill Summary: AB 1609 would require businesses with more than \$500 million in gross annual revenue nationally that provides goods and services to provide customers with timely access to human customer service and support, and to disclose the use of customer service chatbots.

***** ANALYSIS ADDENDUM – SUSPENSE FILE *****

The following information is revised to reflect amendments
adopted by the committee on August 13, 2026

Fiscal Impact: Potential costs to the Department of Justice (DOJ) of an unknown amount. Actual costs will depend on whether the Attorney General pursues enforcement actions, and, if so, the level of additional staffing DOJ needs to handle the related workload. If DOJ hires staff to handle enforcement actions authorized by this bill, the department would incur significant costs, likely in the low hundreds of thousands of dollars annually at a minimum. If DOJ does not pursue enforcement as authorized by this bill, the department would likely not incur any costs. (General Fund).

Cost pressure of an unknown but potentially significant amount to the courts to adjudicate any additional filings. Actual costs will depend on the number of cases filed and the amount of court time needed to resolve each case. An eight-hour court day costs approximately \$10,500 based on the hourly rate of court personnel including at minimum the judge, clerk, bailiff, court reporter, jury administrator, administrative staff, and jury per-diems. While the courts are not funded on a workload basis, an increase in workload could result in delayed court services and increase pressure to fund additional staff and resources. The FY 2026-27 Budget appropriated \$70 million General Fund for this purpose (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund).

Author Amendments:

- Define “Exclusive business lines” as telephone lines, chat lines, or other communications channels that are not intended for general customer use and are intended solely for use by employees of the business or by other entities for business-to-business communications. For purposes of this subdivision, “entities” include other businesses, nonprofit entities, or government entities.
- Provide that a large private business shall provide a clear and conspicuous disclosure that the customer service chatbot is artificially generated and not human if a reasonable person interacting with the customer service chatbot is likely to be misled to believe that the person is interacting with a human.

- Provide that a large business satisfies the requirement of allowing its customers to connect to a customer service agent if its customer service platform enables a customer to request a customer service agent through commonly understood commands, prompts, menu selections, or verbal requests during the customer interaction.
- Provide that a large private business is not required to do any of the following:
 - (1) To connect or respond within 15 minutes if the request or connection is made via electronic mail, web-based contact form, or voicemail message.
 - (2) To offer customer service through a communication platform that the business has not otherwise made available to customers as of January 1, 2027.
- Make other minor, technical changes.

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