

Date of Hearing: April 29, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1994 (Alvarez) – As Amended April 9, 2026

Policy Committee: Public Safety

Vote: 9 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: Yes

**SUMMARY:**

This bill requires every law enforcement agency investigating a criminal act and every agency prosecuting a criminal act to inform crime victims of their rights under applicable immigration relief laws and to provide an “Immigrant Victims Rights and Resources” card designed by the Attorney General.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires the Attorney General, by June 1, 2027, to design and make available in English and Spanish a card containing specified information on federal immigration relief options (including U-visa, T-visa, and VAWA), Fourth and Fifth Amendment rights in encounters with immigration agents, the right to speak to an attorney, and a list of local legal services organizations recognized under the U.S. Department of Justice Executive Office for Immigration Review Recognition and Accreditation program.
- 2) Authorizes the Immigrant Victims Rights and Resources card to be designed as part of, and included with, the existing Marsy Rights card.
- 3) Removes the requirement that the Attorney General’s “Victim Protections and Resources” card include information about federal immigration relief, avoiding a duplicative statutory obligation on that topic.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

- 1) Potentially reimbursable state-mandated local program costs (General Fund), likely minor and ongoing, for local law enforcement agencies and county prosecutors to print, distribute, and make available the Immigrant Victims Rights and Resources card. Because the Attorney General will provide the card in PDF or imaging format rather than as printed stock, production costs fall on distributing agencies. Actual reimbursement contingent on Commission on State Mandates determination.
- 2) Minor ongoing costs to the Department of Justice (DOJ) (General Fund) to design the card in English and Spanish and make it available to agencies, and to maintain the card content, including keeping current the required list of local organizations. The DOJ reports that its existing Victims’ Services Unit (VSU) would need to perform regular upkeep as immigration resources may change due to staffing and change of services. The DOJ notes that although the bill only mandates that the cards be in English and Spanish, the existing Marsy’s card is

currently translated into 23 languages, so DOJ would need to update the card and also update the 23 translations, creating an additional one-time cost on VSU. The DOJ estimates costs of \$150,000 or less on an ongoing basis. The DOJ also notes that implementation of this bill will be dependent upon the appropriation of funds; the DOJ will be unable to absorb the costs to comply with or implement the requirements of the bill within existing budgeted resources.

- 3) Likely costs to state agencies investigating or prosecuting criminal acts of an unknown, but likely minor, amount (General Fund, special fund) — including the Department of Justice, CHP, and other state-level investigative and prosecutorial entities — to distribute the card.

#### COMMENTS:

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

Victims of crime should never be afraid to contact law enforcement. This legislation encourages undocumented victims to report crimes and share information that supports law enforcement investigations, and ensures they receive guidance about the protections available through the U visa, T visa, or under VAWA.

- 2) **Background.** Existing law requires law enforcement and prosecuting agencies to provide crime victims with a Marsy Rights card summarizing constitutional victim rights. Under federal law, undocumented individuals who are victims of certain crimes may be eligible for specified forms of immigration relief. A T-visa is available to victims of severe forms of human trafficking who are physically present in the U.S. on account of such trafficking, comply with reasonable requests for assistance in investigating or prosecuting those acts, and would suffer extreme hardship upon removal. A U-visa is available to individuals who have suffered substantial physical or mental abuse as a result of being the victim of certain qualifying crimes — including rape, trafficking, domestic violence, sexual assault, and others — and who have been, are being, or are likely to be helpful to the investigation or prosecution of the crime. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) provides a separate pathway to lawful immigration status for victims of domestic abuse.

In 2022, AB 160 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 771, Statutes 2022) added a second, broader victim information card — the Victim Protections and Resources card — covering housing, employment, tenants' rights, victim compensation, and federal immigration relief. Because of the Restitution Fund's structural solvency challenges, AB 160 made the entire requirement contingent on (1) General Fund availability over the multiyear forecast and (2) an appropriation to backfill the Restitution Fund. Neither condition has been met, so it has remained inoperative since enactment.

This bill takes the federal-immigration-relief piece out of that inoperative statute and re-enacts it as a standalone requirement — with no contingency clause. As a result, the new card becomes operative on June 1, 2027, regardless of General Fund conditions or Restitution Fund backfill. The remaining components of the Victim Protections and Resources card (housing, employment, victim compensation, and related topics) stay inoperative pending appropriation. The DOJ reports that it needs a delayed implementation date of January 1, 2028 to implement AB 1994.