

Date of Hearing: April 15, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 2179 (Patel) – As Introduced February 19, 2026

Policy Committee: Judiciary

Vote: 12 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill allows any party or witness to a workplace violence restraining order to appear remotely at a hearing and prohibits the court from charging a remote appearance fee, beginning July 1, 2027. It also requires each court to develop a local rule and instructions for accessing remote appearances and post them on the court's website.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Unknown, likely minor, costs to the courts (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund). The Judicial Council estimates a minor revenue impact related to the prohibition on charging for remote access to workplace violence restraining order hearings. The bill does not create fiscal concerns for the judicial branch.

COMMENTS:

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

Today, several restraining order types allow electronic petitions and remote participation, including gun violence, civil harassment, domestic violence, and elder/dependent adult protective orders, but WVRO petitioners and participants do not have the same access. Petitioners facing workplace threats or harassment lose time and incur costs traveling to court to file in person. Remote appearance options also reduce time away from work/home responsibilities and reduce the fear of being near the restrained person.

2) **Background.** Existing law authorizes a person who has suffered harassment, unlawful violence, or threats of unlawful violence to obtain a restraining order against another person. There are numerous types of restraining orders, including a general civil restraining order available to anyone who may feel it necessary; domestic violence restraining orders for individuals in more intimate relationships such as romantic relationships, parent-child relationships, or cohabitants; elder and dependent adult abuse restraining orders; and workplace violence restraining orders available to employers and certain employee-authorized representatives to protect workers. Over the past five years the Legislature has passed laws requiring courts to petition for certain restraining orders electronically and appear remotely for hearing on those petitions. Specifically, in 2021, the Legislature passed SB 538

(Rubio) Chapter 686, Statutes of 2021, requiring courts to accept electronic filings for domestic violence restraining order (DVRO) petitions and authorized a party seeking a DVRO, their support person, or a witness to appear remotely in a hearing on the petition. Last year, the Legislature passed AB 561 (Quirk-Silva) Chapter 267, Statutes of 2025, which enacted various changes to the statutes governing restraining orders including domestic violence restraining orders, EADACPA, and civil harassment restraining orders. This bill extends the procedures established by AB 561 to workplace violence restraining orders, thereby reducing the financial burden on a petitioner and facilitating remote appearances at related hearings. Like AB 561, this bill eliminates specified filing fees, requires a court to accept electronic filings, prohibits a court from charging fees for a petitioner or other parties to appear remotely at certain hearings, and requires each county court to make available on its website specified information relating to workplace violence restraining orders and electronic filings.

Analysis Prepared by: Shiran Zohar / APPR. / (916) 319-2081