

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING
AB 2179 (Patel)
As Introduced February 19, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Authorizes a party or witness to appear remotely at the hearing on a petition for a workplace violence restraining order and requires courts to accept electronic filings for petitions.

Major Provisions

- 1) Sets forth standards and procedures under which a person may seek a temporary civil restraining order and an order after hearing. (Code of Civil Procedure (CCP) Section 527.6.)
- 2) Authorizes a party or witness to a civil restraining order petition to appear remotely at the hearing on a petition. Prohibits courts from charging a fee for a party to appear remotely and requires the courts to develop local rules and instructions for remote appearances. (CCP Section 527.6 (i).)
- 3) Beginning January 1, 2027, requires courts that receive petitions for protective orders to accept those petitions and any filings electronically. (CCP Section 527.6 (y).)
- 4) Beginning January 1, 2027, authorizes a party or witness to appear remotely at the hearing on a petition for an order. Prohibits the superior court from charging a fee for a party to appear remotely and requires them to develop local rules and instructions for remote appearances. (CCP Section 527.6 (i).)
- 5) Sets forth standards and procedures under which an employer or collective bargaining representative of an employee may seek a civil restraining order on behalf of an employee who has suffered harassment, unlawful violence, or a credible threat of violence that can reasonably be construed to be carried out or to have been carried out at the workplace. (CCP Section 527.8.)
- 6) Provides that there is no filing fee for a petition that alleges that a person has inflicted or threatened violence against the employee, stalked the employee, or acted or spoken in any other manner that has placed the employee in reasonable fear of violence, and that seeks a protective or restraining order restraining stalking, future violence, or threats of violence. (CCP Section 527.8 (x).)
- 7) Authorizes, until January 1, 2027, a party to a civil case, when they have provided notice to the court and all other parties, to appear remotely and authorizes the court to conduct conferences, hearings, and proceedings, in whole or in part, through the use of remote technology. (CCP Section 367.75.)
- 8) Establishes the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (DVPA). (Family Code Section 6200.)
- 9) Sets forth standards and procedures under which a person may seek a domestic violence restraining order. (Family Code Section 6240 *et seq.*)

- 10) Requires a court or court facility that receives petitions for domestic violence restraining orders or domestic violence temporary restraining orders to accept those petitions. Beginning January 1, 2027, prohibits charging any fee for electronic filings related to those petitions. (Family Code Section 6307.)
- 11) Authorizes a party, support person, or witness to appear remotely at the hearing on a petition for a domestic violence restraining order. Beginning January 1, 2027, prohibits a fee for a party, support person, or witness to appear remotely at the hearing. (Family Code Section 6308.)
- 12) Sets forth standards and procedures under which an elder or dependent adult who has suffered abuse may seek protective orders. (Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 15657.03.)
- 13) Beginning January 1, 2027, authorizes a party, representative of the county adult protective services agency, or witness to appear remotely at the hearing on a petition for a protective order. Prohibits a fee for remote appearances. (WIC Section 15657.03 (w).)
- 14) Beginning January 1, 2027, requires a court that receives petitions for protective orders to permit those petitions and any filings related to the petitions to be submitted electronically at no charge to the petitioner. (WIC Section 15657.03 (r).)

COMMENTS

Existing law provides a catalog of restraining order options for individuals who have suffered some form of harassment at the hands of another or multiple individuals. Code of Civil Procedure Section 527.6 *et seq* authorizes any individual who has suffered harassment to seek a restraining order protecting them from another person. The Domestic Violence Prevention Act (DVPA) allows individuals to seek domestic violence restraining orders (DVROs) against certain family members and cohabitants. The Elder Abuse and Dependent Adult Civil Protection Act (EADACPA) likewise provides an opportunity for elders and dependent adults to seek restraining orders, as provided under the Welfare and Institutions Code. Finally, the Code of Civil Procedure also creates a mechanism for employers and qualified unions to seek a restraining order on behalf of a worker that has suffered harassment or threats of unlawful violence.

Recent changes to the restraining order statutes. In 2021, the Legislature passed SB 538 (Rubio) Chap. 686, Stats. 2021. SB 538 required courts to accept electronic filings for DVRO petitions and authorized a party seeking a domestic violence restraining order (DVRO), their support person, or a witness to appear remotely in a hearing on the petition. (Family Code Sections 6307, 6308, respectively.) Last year, the Legislature passed AB 561 (Quirk-Silva) Chap. 267, Stats. 2025, which enacted various changes to the statutes governing restraining orders including domestic violence restraining orders, EADACPA, and civil harassment restraining orders. In relevant part, AB 561 made the following changes beginning January 2027: prohibited courts from charging a fee to parties who appear remotely in DVRO proceedings; authorized parties seeking civil restraining orders to appear remotely for a hearing on the petition and prohibited collecting fees to do so; required courts to accept electronic filings without an accompanying fee; and made the same conforming changes to EADACPA for elder and dependent adult restraining orders. In sum, SB 538 and AB 561 have worked in tandem to eventually allow parties to

petition for various types of restraining orders to file their petitions electronically and appear remotely for the hearing on the petition, without additional fees.

As detailed in the analysis for AB 561, "[s]ubmitting paperwork in person for an application to obtain a protective order to prevent abuse or harassment – whether for domestic violence, harassment, or elder abuse – can be inconvenient to petitioners, who may also have pressing needs, including to move their residence, protect their financial assets, or obtain urgently needed palliative or medical care." (Assembly Committee on Judiciary analysis of AB 561 (March 25, 2025).)

However, AB 561 did not make conforming changes to workplace violence restraining order procedures. Therefore, petitioners and witnesses for a workplace violence restraining order are required to appear in person both to file the petition and for the hearing on the petition.

Providing consistency with other forms of restraining orders, this bill authorizes a party or witness seeking a workplace violence restraining order to appear remotely at the hearing on a petition. In line with both the standard civil restraining order and domestic violence restraining order statutes, this bill also prohibits the court from charging a fee for a party to appear remotely, and directs the court to develop local rules and instructions for the remote appearances. The bill also requires courts to allow parties to submit their petition for restraining orders and related filings electronically.

It is not clear why workplace violence restraining orders were left out of AB 561. Workplace violence restraining orders are distinguishable from civil restraining orders, DVROs and elder and dependent adult restraining orders in that the petitioner is either an employer or the worker's union, rather than the harassed party. Nonetheless, the impetus underlying allowing parties to file petitions remotely in other types of restraining order cases – to allow protected parties and witnesses to maintain distance from the restrained party and ease access to the proceeding, and in doing so encourage parties to seek restraining orders where necessary – appears to remain the same in the context of workplace violence. Thus, providing the same opportunities to file petitions electronically and allowing parties and witnesses to appear remotely in hearings seems a reasonable proposal.

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.

Arguments in Support

This bill is co-sponsored by the City of Carlsbad and the San Diego County District Attorney's Office. It enjoys additional support from the California Hospital Association, a number of unions, labor and employment organizations, and the California District Attorneys Association. In support of the bill the sponsors write:

California law currently allows employers (and, in certain cases, authorized collective bargaining representatives) to seek workplace violence restraining orders when an employee has suffered unlawful violence, harassment, or a credible threat of violence that could

reasonably be carried out at the workplace. However, the process can still require in-person participation and paper-based steps that create unnecessary barriers — especially for employees and witnesses who may fear retaliation, lack transportation, cannot easily take time off work, or face safety concerns traveling to and from court.

[...]

AB 2179 supports workplace safety by making restraining order proceedings more accessible and safer to navigate. By reducing practical barriers to participation, the bill can help ensure the court receives the information it needs while minimizing disruption to work and reducing safety risks for parties and witnesses.

Arguments in Opposition

None on file

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, 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.

VOTES

ASM JUDICIARY: 12-0-0

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

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 13-0-2

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Muratsuchi, Pellerin

UPDATED

VERSION: February 19, 2026

CONSULTANT: Manuela Boucher / JUD. / (916) 319-2334

FN: 0002366