

Date of Hearing: April 7, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Ash Kalra, Chair
AB 2235 (Pacheco) – As Introduced February 19, 2026

As Proposed to be Amended

SUBJECT: THE JUDICIAL HOME SECURITY ACT

KEY ISSUE: IN RESPONSE TO INCREASING THREATS AGAINST JUDICIAL OFFICERS SHOULD THE LEGISLATURE ENACT THE JUDICIAL HOME SECURITY ACT WHICH WOULD ALLOW JUDICIAL OFFICERS AND THEIR FAMILIES TO SHIELD THEIR HOME ADDRESSES FROM PUBLIC DISCLOSURE?

SYNOPSIS

On March 23, 2026, in her speech before both houses of the Legislature for the annual State of the Judiciary, Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court Patricia Guerrero called the Legislature to action on the issue of judicial security. In particular, Chief Justice Guerrero made a plea for resources to protect judicial officers from physical, online, and cyber threats, and reflected on an increase in dangerous rhetoric targeted at the judicial branch. This bill presents one such attempt and proposes the Judicial Home Security Act. Modeled after the existing Safe at Home Program, the Judicial Home Security Act would allow judicial officers to apply to the Attorney General to have an alternate mailing address substituted for any reference to their home address in public records. While supportive in concept, the California Land Title Association raises a nuanced concern surrounding the bill's potential to frustrate the legal doctrine of constructive notice. Additionally, the California Assessors' Association applaud the author's ultimate goal, but raise a number of implementation concerns. These issues, and some proposed fixes, are discussed in further detail in the body of this analysis. Additionally, the author proposes a number of clarifying amendments incorporated into the SUMMARY and also discussed in the COMMENTS section of this analysis.

This bill is sponsored by the California Judges Association and supported by the Association of African American California Judicial Officers, California Women Judges, and Kiesel Law LLP. There is no formal opposition on file.

SUMMARY: Establishes the Judicial Home Security Act. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Enacts the Judicial Home Security Act (Act).
- 2) Makes the following findings and declarations on behalf of the Legislature:
 - a) The Legislature finds that persons employed as judicial officers in California are subject to increased risk of threats or actual violence against themselves and their families. As public officials responsible for the functioning of the judicial system, judicial officers have a uniquely high level of exposure to the public and the criminal justice system. Persons and groups might attempt to subvert, delay, or otherwise impede the justice system by threatening or intimidating judicial officers. These individuals or groups may also threaten or take violent action against judicial officers or their families as retribution

for past rulings or judicial actions. The threat of violence towards judicial officers and their families extends beyond the courtroom and into the home. The purpose of this chapter is to enable state and local agencies to respond to requests for public records without disclosing or referencing in any way the home addresses of judicial officers who are in the Judicial Home Security Program, to enable interagency cooperation with the Attorney General in providing home address confidentiality for these judicial officers, and to enable state and local agencies to substitute mailing addresses for any reference to home addresses of these judicial officers in records that are made public;

- b) The Legislature finds that judicial officers are subject to such serious and detrimental risks of threats and violence that the public interest in justice and fairness under the law clearly outweighs the public interest served by disclosure of judicial officers' home addresses. Any reference to judicial officers' home address is thus entitled to exemption from the California Public Records Act.
- 3) Defines the following for the purpose of this Act, unless the context clearly requires otherwise:
- a) "Home address" includes any reference to all of the following, as specified on the individual's application to be a program participant:
 - i) A property address;
 - ii) A common street address;
 - iii) An assessor's parcel number;
 - iv) A property legal description.
 - b) "Alternate mailing address" means a United States Postal Service post office box or personal mailbox provided by a private company;
 - c) "Domicile" means a place of habitation, as defined;
 - d) "Cohabitant" means two unrelated adult persons living together for a substantial period of time, resulting in some permanency of relationship;
 - e) "Household member" means an adult person who resides at the same home address as the applicant or participant and is related to the applicant or participant by blood, marriage, registered domestic partnership, or adoption, or is a cohabitant of an applicant or participant;
 - f) "Program participant" means a person certified as a program participant under the Act;
 - g) "Judicial officer" means a person who is currently employed or was formerly employed as any of the following:
 - i) A supreme court justice;
 - ii) A court of appeal judge or justice;

- iii) A superior court or district court judge;
 - iv) A municipal court judge;
 - v) A court commissioner or court magistrate;
 - vi) A federal, state, or local agency judge;
 - vii) A tribal judge.
- 4) Authorizes an adult person who is domiciled in California to apply to the Attorney General to have a designated alternate mailing address substituted for any reference to the person's home address in records that are made public.
- 5) Requires the Attorney General to approve the application if it is filed in the manner and on the form prescribed by the Attorney General and contains all of the following:
- a) Documentation showing that the individual is to commence employment or is a judicial officer;
 - b) A sworn statement that the applicant fears for their safety or the safety of their family due to their employment as a judicial officer;
 - c) The alternate mailing address requested for substitution for any reference to the person's home address in public records. Requires the application to include documentation issued by the United States Postal Service or the personal mailbox rental company confirming the mailbox is rented to the applicant or a household member of the applicant;
 - i) Prohibits the Attorney General from approving an application if the alternate mailing address is any address other than a post office box or personal mailbox, or if it is a post office box or mailbox rented by anyone other than the applicant or a household member of the applicant.
 - d) The telephone number and email addresses where the applicant can be reached by the Attorney General;
 - e) The home address that the applicant requests not be disclosed because disclosure will increase the risk of harassment, threats, or violence against the applicant or their family;
 - f) The signature of the applicant under penalty of perjury and the date on which the applicant signed the application.
- 6) Requires applications to be filed with the office of the Attorney General.
- 7) Requires submitted applications to be accompanied by payment of a fee to be determined by the Attorney General, but not exceeding the actual costs of enrolling in the program. Further authorizes the Attorney General to assess annual fees to defray the actual costs of maintaining the program, and use those fees to reimburse the General Fund for any amounts expended from that fund for the purposes of the Act.

- 8) Creates the Judicial Home Security Program Fund in the General Fund. Requires all moneys collected by the Attorney General pursuant to the Act to be deposited into the fund. Makes moneys in the fund available for the administration of the program established pursuant to the act upon appropriation by the Legislature.
- 9) Requires the Attorney General to certify the applicant as a program participant upon filing a properly completed application. Requires program participants to be certified for life, unless the certification is withdrawn or invalidated pursuant to the Act's provisions.
- 10) Requires the Attorney General to issue documentation to certified program participants that they are a certified program participant which is required to occur, but not be limited to, both of the following:
 - a) A program participant identification card listing their alternate mailing address;
 - b) A standing authorization by the Attorney General for the program participant to use the alternate mailing address for all protections offered by the program.
- 11) Makes a person who knowingly provides false or incorrect information upon making an application guilty of a misdemeanor. Requires notice to be printed in bold type and in a conspicuous location on the face of the application informing the applicant of the penalties for a violation.
- 12) Authorizes a program participant to update their home address or alternate mailing address in the program by submitting to the Attorney General written notification of the same with the participant's current identification card. Requires the Attorney General to issue a new identification card.
- 13) Authorizes a program participant to withdraw from program participation by submitting to the Attorney General written notification of withdrawal and the program participant's current identification card. Requires certification to be terminated on the date of receipt of this notification.
- 14) Authorizes the Attorney General to terminate a program participant's certification and invalidate the program participant's authorization card for any of the following reasons:
 - a) The program participant has failed to pay their annual program fee. Before terminating a participant's certification due to a lapse in payment, requires the Attorney General to attempt to contact the participant by telephone and email, if available, to resolve the payment issue;
 - b) The Attorney General has been informed that another state agency has determined that false information was used in the application process to qualify as a program participant or that participation in the program is being used as a subterfuge to avoid detection of illegal or criminal activity or apprehension by law enforcement;
 - c) The program participant no longer resides at the most recent home address provided to the Attorney General and has not provided notice in writing of a change in address within 30 days of the change in their home address;

- d) The United States Postal Service or the personal mailbox rental company responsible for the alternate mailing address of a program participant informs the Attorney General that the alternate mailing address is no longer rented in the name of the program participant or their household member;
 - e) The program participant moves from their California place of residence to relocate out of state.
- 15) Requires the Attorney General, if termination is based on any of the reasons under 14), to send written notification of the intended termination to the program participant.
- 16) Grants the program participant 30 days in which to appeal the intended termination under procedures developed by the Attorney General.
- 17) Directs the Attorney General to create, maintain, and update monthly a list that includes the following information for each current program participant:
- a) Name;
 - b) County of residence;
 - c) Designated alternate mailing address.
- 18) Requires the list to be publicly available for compliance purposes.
- 19) Directs the Attorney General to create, maintain, and update monthly a list that includes former program participants who are no longer in the program, regardless of the reason. Makes the list available to state and local agencies and third-party data brokers and aggregators for compliance purposes.
- 20) Requires state and local agencies, when disclosing or releasing records or information that would otherwise contain the home address of a program participant in any format or medium, to substitute the program participant's alternate mailing address for any reference to the program participant's home address.
- 21) Requires County Assessor and Recorder offices, when disclosing or releasing records or information that would otherwise contain the situs of the home address of a program participant in any format or medium, to substitute the program participants alternate mailing address for the situs address on real property deeds, real estate records, and any other records containing the home address of the program participant.
- 22) If a program participant leaves the program, requires the Attorney General and state local agencies to retain all records relating to that program participant for at least three years from departure, regardless of the reason for the departure.
- 23) Prohibits the Attorney General and state and local agencies from allowing disclosure or release of a program participant's home address except in any of the following circumstances:
- a) If requested by any of the following:

- i) A law enforcement agency, to the law enforcement agency;
 - ii) A consumer reporting agency, as defined;
 - iii) A financial institution subject to the federal Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act and regulations implementing that Act;
 - iv) A title company;
 - v) An attorney representing a client in any of the following matters: estate planning; judgment enforcement; bankruptcy debtor or trustee representation; real estate transaction;
 - vi) A real estate licensee, as defined.
- b) If directed by a court order, to a person identified in the order;
- c) Specifies that nothing in this section should be construed as prohibiting an address to name search of real estate records, meaning a search of real estate records or address information based solely on a property address. Clarifies that the section is intended to expressly prohibit disclosure or release of a home address based on a program participant's name, including a search of real estate records or address information based on a program participant's name.
- 24) Prohibits a person or organization from publicly posting or displaying the home address of a program participant who has made a written demand of that person or organization, including on the internet.
- 25) Prohibits a third-party data broker or aggregator from selling, licensing, trading, purchasing, transferring, releasing, or otherwise sharing in any format or medium the home address of a program participant, including on the internet.
- 26) Establishes that certification as a program participant is not evidence that minor children in the program participant's custody are at risk in the participant's care.
- 27) Authorizes the Attorney General to adopt guidance to facilitate the administration of the Act by state and local agencies.
- 28) Requires the Attorney General to commence accepting applications under this program on April 1, 2027.
- 29) Directs the Attorney General, beginning January 10, 2028, and no later than January 10 of each year thereafter, to submit a report to the Legislature that includes the total number of applications received for the program. Requires the report to be submitted in compliance with Government Code Section 9795.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the Safe at Home (SAH) address confidentiality program within the office of the Secretary of State (SOS) in order to enable state and local agencies to both accept and respond to requests for public records without disclosing the changed name or address of a

victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Permits any such adult victim, or parent or guardian acting on behalf of a minor or incapacitated person, to apply through a community-based victims' assistance program to have an address designated by the SOS as his or her substitute mailing address. (Chapter 3.1 (commencing with Section 6205) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code.)

- 2) Prohibits a state or local agency from publicly posting the home address, telephone number, or both the name and assessor parcel number associated with the home address of any elected or appointed official on the internet without first obtaining the written permission of that individual. (Government Code Section 7928.205 (a).)
- 3) Allows reproductive health care providers, employees, volunteers, and patients to apply to the address confidentiality program through a community-based victims' assistance program, as specified. (Government Code Section 6215 *et seq.*)

FISCAL EFFECT: As currently in print this bill is keyed fiscal.

COMMENTS: On March 23, 2026, in her speech before both houses of the Legislature for the annual State of the Judiciary, Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court Patricia Guerrero called the Legislature to action on the issue of judicial security. The Chief Justice made a plea for “resources to protect ‘personnel, the public and court systems from physical, online, and cyber threats.’” Her statements further called for legislation “designed to protect the privacy of judges – an issue that is fundamentally intertwined with judicial security.”

“A marked increase in negative rhetoric surrounding judges, including comments from elected officials, has contributed to these concerns. We welcome public scrutiny, transparency, and accountability regarding the legal reasoning reflected in our rulings. Public engagement, whether resulting in praise or criticism for our decisions, is commendable and should be encouraged. We do not, however, welcome divisive name-calling or inaccurate and uninformed accounts about our roles – this serves only to distort the public’s understanding of the judiciary and shake their confidence in our democracy. And we should emphatically speak out against the normalization of personal attacks against judges – for all our sakes.”

These comments come after several years of increased violence targeted at judicial officers. According to the author:

Violence and threats against judges have risen sharply, with thousands of incidents reported in recent years and a dramatic increase since 2015, leaving many judges and their families fearing for their safety. At the same time, judicial officers’ home addresses remain easily accessible through public records and online databases, creating a direct pathway for bad actors to locate them and their families. Existing privacy protections in California are insufficient, as they do not effectively prevent the widespread dissemination of this sensitive information, especially when it originates from government sources. This gap leaves judges uniquely exposed to targeted harassment, intimidation, and potential violence at their homes.

AB 2235, the Judicial Home Security Act, addresses this urgent risk by allowing judges to use an alternate mailing address in public records while preserving legitimate access for business, legal, and law enforcement purposes. By replacing home addresses, the bill strikes a careful balance between transparency and safety, ensuring public records remain functional without compromising personal security. In light of the escalating threats and clear

vulnerabilities, AB 2235 is a necessary and measured step to protect the judiciary and uphold the integrity of the justice system.

Existing law relating to public disclosure of personal information. Individual property records, including the full name of the owner, are publicly accessible through local agencies, county assessor and recorders offices. The availability of that information makes it fairly easy for someone trying to find a specific person to do so, as long as they own property in California. Additionally, the California Public Records Act requires public records to be open to inspection by the public at all times during the office hours of a public agency, unless otherwise exempted. (California Government Code Section 7922.525.) One of the CPRA's numerous exceptions includes the home address or telephone number, along with other personally identifiable information, and the home address or telephone number of an elected or appointed official absent prior written permission. (Government Code Section 7928.300 (a), 7928.205.) In 2024, the Legislature enacted AB 1785 (Pacheco, 2024) Chap. 551, Stats. 2024. That measure clarified that in addition to the previous two exceptions, public agencies are prohibited from posting the name and assessor's parcel number associated with the home address of any elected or appointed official without first obtaining written consent. (Government Code Section 7928.205.)

Safe at Home. An important tool to protect the safety of persons who are subject to abuse and harassment is the Secretary of State's (SOS) Safe at Home (SAH) address confidentiality program. The SAH program was created in 1998 to allow victims of domestic violence or stalking to obtain an alternate confidential address to be used in public records. Under the SAH program, the SOS is responsible for providing a substitute address to program participants while protecting their actual residential addresses, and also acts as the participants' agent for service of process, and forwards mail received at the substitute address. A participant must be certified by the enrolling office and may stay in the program for four years unless recertified. Their SAH address is also accepted by California state, county, and city government agencies in lieu of a residential or other mailing address.

The SAH address confidentiality program has been expanded over time to include survivors of other crimes – including sexual assault, human trafficking, stalking, and elder or dependent adult abuse. (See Section 6205.) In 2002, the SAH program was replicated and made available to reproductive health care services providers, employees, volunteers and patients who are fearful for their safety. (See Government Code Section 6215 (a).) In 2022, as the result of AB 1131 (Newman), Chap. 554, Stats. 2022, the program for reproductive service providers, employees, volunteers and patients was expanded to include a person is employed by or performs work pursuant to a contract with a public entity and faces threats of violence or violence or harassment from the public because of their work for the public entity. (See Government Code Section 6215 (b).) In response to increasing threats against professionals that provide gender-affirming care the Legislature once again expanded the Safe at Home program to capture gender-affirming health care providers, employees, or volunteers (AB 82 (Ward, 2025) Chap. 679, Stats. 2025).

This bill proposes another expansion of the concept initially introduced by the SAH program, this time available to the state's judicial officers. The Judicial Home Security Act would authorize a judicial officer to apply to the Attorney General (AG) to have an alternate mailing address substituted for their home address in public records. In order to qualify, the judicial officer would be required to 1) demonstrate that they are currently or were formerly employed as a judicial officer, and 2) submit a sworn statement that they fear for their safety or the safety of their family because of their employment as a judicial officer.

The bill would require local and state agencies to use the participant's alternate address when releasing any public record that would otherwise reflect their home address, prohibit anyone from publicly posting a participant's home address, and would prohibit third party data brokers from sharing or selling a participant's address. Acknowledging the numerous legitimate business reasons why certain professionals may need access to a participant's home address, the bill also provides a list of circumstances and related professionals that may access the participant's full address upon request.

Author's amendments. As currently in print, this bill would prohibit a person or organization from publicly sharing a participant's home address. However, there is no indication of how that person or organization may know about the participant's enrollment in the program. In order to address this ambiguity, and to more closely mirror existing provisions in the SAH program, the author proposes the following amendment:

6225.9 (a) A person or organization shall not publicly post or display the home address of a program participant **who has made a written demand of that person or organization**, including on the internet.

The author is also proposing a number of clarifying technical amendments as follows:

- **6225.3.** (a) An adult person who is domiciled in California may apply to the Attorney General to have a designated alternate mailing address substituted for any reference to the person's home address in records that are made public. The Attorney General shall approve an application if it is filed in the manner and on the form prescribed by the Attorney General and if it contains all of the following:

(1) Documentation showing that the individual is to commence employment or is **currently or formerly employed as** a judicial officer.

[...]

(c) **(1)** Submitted applications shall be accompanied by payment of a fee to be determined by the Attorney General. This fee shall not exceed the actual costs of enrolling in the program. **In addition, annual fees may also be assessed by the**

(2) The Attorney General **may assess annual fee to the program participant in an amount** to defray the actual costs of maintaining this program. **Annual fees assessed by the Attorney General shall also be used and** to reimburse the General Fund for any amounts expended from that fund for the purposes of this chapter.

(d) The Judicial Home Security Program Fund is hereby created in the General Fund. **All moneys collected by the Attorney General pursuant to this chapter shall be deposited into the fund.** Upon appropriation by the Legislature, moneys in the fund are available for the administration of the program established pursuant to this chapter.

(e) Upon filing a properly completed application, the Attorney General shall certify the applicant as a program participant. Program participants shall be certified for life, unless **and until** the certification is withdrawn or **invalidated before that date terminated pursuant to Section 6225.4.**

- (f) *Certified program participants shall receive documentation issued by the The Attorney General shall issue a certified program participant documentation* that they are a certified program participant. *This which* shall *occur by means including include*, but not *be* limited to, both of the following:
- **6225.4.** (a) A program participant may withdraw from program participation by submitting to the Attorney General written notification of withdrawal and the program participant's current identification card. Certification shall be terminated on the date of receipt of this notification.

(b) The Attorney General may terminate a program participant's certification and invalidate the program participant's authorization card for any of the following reasons:

[...]

(3) The program participant no longer resides at the most recent home address provided to the Attorney General and has not provided notice in writing of a change in address within 30 days *of the change of their home address*.
 - **6225.8.** (a) The Attorney General and state and local agencies shall not allow disclosure or release of a program participant's home address except under any of the following circumstances:
 - (1) If requested by *any of the following* ~~a law enforcement agency, to the law enforcement agency.~~
 - (A) A law enforcement agency, to the law enforcement agency.*
 - (B) A consumer reporting agency, as defined by Section 1681a of Title 15 of the United States Code.*
 - (C) A financial institution subject to the federal Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (Public Law 106-102) and regulations implementing that act.*
 - (D) A title company.*
 - (E) An attorney representing a client in any of the following matters:*
 - (i) Estate planning.*
 - (ii) Judgment enforcement.*
 - (iii) Bankruptcy debtor or trustee representation.*
 - (iv) Real estate transaction.*
 - (F) A real estate licensee, as defined in Section 10014 of the Business and Professions Code.*
 - (2) If directed by a court order, to a person identified in the order.

- ~~(3) A consumer reporting agency, as defined by Section 1681a of Title 15 of the United States Code.~~
- ~~(4) A financial institution subject to the federal Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (Public Law 106-102) and regulations implementing that act.~~
- ~~(5) A title company.~~
- ~~(6) An attorney representing a client in any of the following matters:~~
- ~~(A) Estate planning.~~
- ~~(B) Judgment enforcement.~~
- ~~(C) Bankruptcy debtor or trustee representation.~~
- ~~(D) Real estate transaction.~~
- ~~(7) A real estate licensee, as defined in Section 10014 of the Business and Professions Code.~~
- **6225.12.** (a) The Attorney General shall commence accepting applications under this program on April 1, 2027.
 - (b) (1) ~~The Attorney General shall submit to the Legislature, Beginning January 10, 2028, and~~ no later than January 10 of each year ~~thereafter, the Attorney General shall submit to the Legislature~~ a report that includes the total number of applications received for the program established by this chapter.

Concerns from the California Assessors' Association. While supportive of the author's goal, the Assessors' Association raise concerns regarding the bill's implementation. They voice concern over a lack of clarity as to how the participant's request to substitute their real address for the new "alternate address" may impact their internal and cross-departmental functions such as tax collection, recorder, and appeals. They request language to clarify the distinction between internal use of a participant's mailing address and external publication.

The Assessors also note that the list of exemptions to the bill, or circumstances in which certain professionals may gain access to a participant's address, may be broadly interpreted and that the accompanying risk to the professional may foreclose their ability to benefit from the exemption. They request a "centralized, standardized verification and disclosure process administered at the state level."

Next, the Assessor's point out some potential complications related to the Board of Equalization, which is the regulatory body that oversees the state's assessors. The Assessors request "clarity on how compliance is to be audited and adjudicated, and defining the chain of responsibility." The Assessors also suggest ensuring that the new program would comply, or potentially conflict, with Sections 408.1 and 602 of the Revenue and Taxation Code regarding property assessments. *Should this bill move forward, the author is encouraged to continue collaboration with the Assessors' Association to ensure the bill can be effectively implemented.*

Finally, the Assessors suggest that the bill as currently in print “requires the maintenance of an ‘unaltered database to be available to those who have a legitimate business purpose to access a registered participant’s home address.’” Although the bill in print does not currently require either the AG nor any other agency to maintain one or more databases in order to implement the new program, it is reasonable to conclude that some state agencies may ultimately need to do so. *The author is encouraged to collaborate with the Assessors to ensure such requirements can be implemented by the Assessors and similarly situated agencies.*

Concerns from the California Land Title Association regarding the Act’s impact on constructive notice. While likewise supportive of the bill’s intent, California Land Title Association (CLTA) has raised concerns that the breadth of the Act may inadvertently frustrate the doctrine of constructive notice in California. The doctrine of constructive notice refers to the concept that someone may be able to piece together notice of an event, regardless of whether they were formally notified. In the context of real estate transactions, constructive notice consists of various documented legal transactions, such as recording a deed with a county recorder’s office. AB 2235, however, defines “home address” to include not only the applicant’s property address and common street address, but also the assessor’s parcel number and the property’s legal description. CLTA acknowledges that the bill attempts to address this issue by exempting title companies and attorneys representing a client in a real estate transaction and other specified professionals who may request the participant’s home address. However, according to CLTA, by including such an expansive definition of “home address,” the bill effectively precludes any opportunity for a potential buyer who is *not* one of those professionals to have constructive notice of the sale of a property.

The expansive scope of the Judicial Home Security Act deviates from the precedent set by the Safe at Home program. The SAH program defines “address” as a residential street address, school address, or work address. It does not include assessor’s parcel number or property’s legal description. It is not clear why judicial officers would need *more* information shielded from public discovery than individuals who may participate in the existing SAH program. Additionally, it seems that these extra two elements risk causing significant implementational concerns when they are arguably unnecessary in light of the written permission required by AB 1785, discussed above. *The author may wish to consider amending the definition of “home address” to more closely adhere to the existing SAH program by deleting reference to assessor’s parcel number and property’s legal description.* This amendment would also seem to address some concerns raised by the Assessors Association.

Additional considerations. While modeled after the SAH program, the Judicial Home Security Act is distinct in a number of ways. One such deviation are the references to “third-party data brokers and aggregators.” Third-party data broker refers to a business that collects individuals’ personal information, whether that’s a physical address, name, phone number, or other type of data point, and sells it to other businesses. The bill requires the AG to maintain a list that includes former participants’ information and makes that list available to state and local agencies *and third-party data brokers and aggregators* “for compliance purposes.” (Proposed Section 6225.5 (b).) While the act would impose confidentiality standards on state and local agencies that may otherwise be obligated to disclose a program participant’s home address, there does not appear to be an equivalent requirement for third-party data brokers. In fact, these private businesses seem more appropriately captured under the notice provision under proposed Section 6225.9. *Therefore, the author may wish to consider striking the reference to third-party data brokers and aggregators from proposed section 6225.5 (b).*

Finally, Section 6225.6 (b) requires County Assessor and Recorder offices to substitute a participant's home address with their alternate mailing address on any record that may contain their full home address, such as a deed. However, it is not clear from the text of the bill how a County Assessor and Recorder may ever know about the judicial officer's participation in the program. While state and local agencies are required to have access to the AG's monthly list of *former* participants, there is nothing that requires the county offices to receive notice of someone's participation. Considering the participants themselves are the ones who will be the first to know about their own participation and likely most quickly able to alert their local county offices about their new designation, *the author may wish to consider amending Section 6225(b) to only require the County Assessor and Recorders to substitute the participant's address upon notice provided by the participant themselves.*

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: This bill is sponsored by the California Judges Association. It is supported by the Association of African American California Judicial Officers, California Women Judges, and Kiesel Law LLP. In support of the bill the sponsors submit:

Judicial officers routinely preside over high-conflict criminal, civil, and family law matters, and their work can expose them and their families to threats of violence or even death. As public officials responsible for the functioning of the justice system, judges face a heightened risk of threats or violence stemming from decisions they are required to make in the course of their duties.

Unfortunately, under current law it can be relatively easy for individuals to locate a judge's home address through publicly available property and government records. These records are often accessible through county assessors and recorder offices and, in some jurisdictions, through online databases. The ease with which this information can be obtained creates significant safety concerns for judicial officers and their families and increases the risk that individuals with malicious intent could use these records to locate a judge's residence.

In recent years, violence and threats against judges have increased significantly nationwide. According to the U.S. Marshals Service, which is responsible for protecting federal judges, there were 5,873 threats and inappropriate communications directed at members of the judiciary between 2021 and 2022; overall there has been an alarming 400 percent increase since 2015. Courts and judicial officers have also been targeted through bomb threats to state court facilities and intimidation directed at judges handling controversial cases. Tragically, several violent incidents have underscored these risks, including the assassination of an Indiana judge and his wife earlier this year, the attempted murder of a Nevada district judge, and the murder of the son of a federal judge at her home in New Jersey. These incidents highlight the continuing need to strengthen safeguards that prevent the improper disclosure of the home addresses which can be used to target judges and their families.

AB 2235 addresses this concern by allowing judicial officers to designate an alternate mailing address, such as a post office box or private mailbox, to be substituted wherever their home address would otherwise appear in public records. State and local agencies, including county assessors and recorder offices, would use the alternate mailing address when disclosing records that would otherwise reveal a judge's home address.

Importantly, the bill maintains appropriate transparency and legitimate access to records. Law enforcement agencies and certain regulated entities with a bona fide need for

information, such as financial institutions, title companies, and attorneys involved in real estate transactions, may still access the home address when necessary for lawful purposes.

By protecting the home addresses of judicial officers and their families, AB 2235 helps reduce the risk of harassment, intimidation, and violence directed at judges outside the courthouse. Ensuring that judicial officers can carry out their duties without fear of retaliation in their homes strengthens judicial independence and promotes public confidence in the fair and impartial administration of justice.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Judges Association (sponsor)
Association of African American California Judicial Officers, INC.
California Women Judges
Kiesel Law LLP
1 individual

Opposition

None on file

Oppose unless amended

California Assessors' Association
California Land Title Association

Analysis Prepared by: Manuela Boucher-de la Cadena / JUD. / (916) 319-2334