

Date of Hearing: May 13, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 2235 (Pacheco) – As Amended April 9, 2026

Policy Committee: Judiciary

Vote: 12 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill enacts the Judicial Home Security Act, which establishes within the Department of Justice an address confidentiality program authorizing current and former judicial officers to apply to have an alternate mailing address substituted for their home address in public records.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires the Attorney General to certify eligible applicants as program participants for life, subject to specified withdrawal and termination provisions, and to issue program participant identification cards.
- 2) Requires state and local agencies, when disclosing records containing a participant's home address, to substitute the participant's alternate mailing address. The bill imposes parallel requirements on county assessor and county recorder offices with respect to real property deeds and records.
- 3) Authorizes the Attorney General to charge a one-time enrollment fee not exceeding actual enrollment costs and an annual fee to defray ongoing program costs and reimburse the General Fund.
- 4) Creates the Judicial Home Security Program Fund in the General Fund to receive fee revenue, available upon appropriation for administration of the program.
- 5) Requires the Attorney General to begin accepting applications by April 1, 2027, and to submit an annual report to the Legislature beginning January 10, 2028.
- 6) Provides specified exceptions allowing disclosure of a participant's home address to law enforcement, consumer reporting agencies, financial institutions subject to Gramm-Leach-Bliley, title companies, real estate licensees, attorneys in specified matters, and upon court order.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Costs (General Fund) of an unknown but potentially significant amount, likely in the low millions of dollars one-time and several hundred thousand to over one million dollars annually ongoing, to the Department of Justice (DOJ) to stand up and administer a new judicial home security address confidentiality program. The Secretary of State estimated approximately \$330,000 in year one and \$255,000 ongoing for an analogous expansion of

the existing Safe at Home program to a new applicant type under AB 82 (Ward), Chapter 679, Statutes of 2025; standing up an entirely new program at DOJ, which has no existing address confidentiality program infrastructure, would likely entail substantially higher startup costs. DOJ was unable to provide an estimate at the time this analysis was written.

- 2) The bill creates the Judicial Home Security Program Fund within the General Fund, supported by application and annual fees set by DOJ at amounts not to exceed actual program costs. Fee revenue is likely to lag program startup costs, requiring General Fund support in the early years until the participant base stabilizes and fees can be set to recover ongoing costs. The actual costs and fee structure depend on the size of the participant universe — California has roughly 1,750 sitting Superior Court judges, 110 Court of Appeal justices, seven Supreme Court justices, plus unknown numbers of court commissioners and magistrates, federal judges, state and local agency administrative law judges, tribal judges, and former judicial officers (who are eligible for lifetime certification under the bill).
- 3) Costs (local funds) of an unknown but potentially significant amount to county assessor and recorder offices to modify records systems to support alternate-address substitution on real property deeds, real estate records, and other county records containing participant home addresses. Workload includes identifying parcels owned by program participants, modifying records to substitute alternate addresses, and maintaining records ongoing as participants enter and exit the program. These costs are potentially reimbursable by the state, subject to a determination by the Commission on State Mandates.
- 4) Costs (Trial Court Trust Fund) of an unknown but likely minor amount to the trial courts to issue court orders authorizing disclosure and to adjudicate civil enforcement actions for unauthorized disclosure or data broker violations.

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year beginning in the 2027-28 fiscal year.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** 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.

- 2) **Background.** California operates the Safe at Home program under the Secretary of State, established in 1998 for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, and elder or dependent adult abuse, and subsequently extended to reproductive and gender-affirming health care providers and public employees facing work-related threats. This bill draws on that model but places the judicial program under the Attorney General rather than the Secretary of State, and adopts a broader definition of “home address” that includes assessor’s parcel number and property legal description in addition to residential and common street addresses. Existing law also restricts public posting by state and local agencies of the home address, phone number, or name paired with APN for elected and appointed officials without written consent under AB 1785 (Pacheco), Chapter 551, Statutes 2024. That statute addresses one disclosure channel — internet posting by government agencies — and applies only to a narrow class of officials. It does not prevent disclosure of judicial officer home addresses via Public Records Act requests, does not substitute an alternate address on underlying records (including real property deeds), does not bind third-party data brokers, and generally does not cover court commissioners and magistrates, federal judges, tribal judges, agency administrative law judges, or retired or former judicial officers. This bill establishes an affirmative address confidentiality program addressing those gaps. In her March 23, 2026 State of the Judiciary address, Chief Justice Patricia Guerrero called on the Legislature to provide resources to protect judicial officers from physical, online, and cyber threats and to advance legislation protecting judge privacy. This bill responds to that call.

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