

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
Senator Thomas Umberg, Chair
2025-2026 Regular Session

AB 2247 (Elhawary)
Version: May 18, 2026
Hearing Date: June 30, 2026
Fiscal: Yes
Urgency: No
AM

SUBJECT

Trauma Healing and Resilience Investment for Victimized and Exposed Youth Act

DIGEST

Establishes the Trauma Healing and Resilience Investment for Victimized and Exposed Youth Act pilot grant program in four counties, until January 1, 2032, to the extent that funds are provided, to pay for mental health and counseling services for youth survivors of gun violence. The bill makes client information and records of mental health services provided under the Act confidential and exempt from disclosure under the California Public Records Act (CPRA).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to the California Firearm Injury Dashboard, nearly 2,000 children and youth 25 years old and under were injured or killed by an act of gun violence in 2022 alone.¹ The author and sponsors note that the burden of gun violence disproportionately affects communities of color – Black youth in California are victims of gun violence at a rate 21 times that of their White peers, and Latino youth at a rate four times that of their White peers.² According to a peer-reviewed study published in JAMA in 2021, living in low-income communities makes youth especially vulnerable to gun violence finding that “more than half of all firearm-related deaths and two-thirds of all firearm-related homicides could be associated with living in a county with higher poverty concentration.”³ Lack of support after experiencing such trauma can leave lasting impacts, including on school and work, long term mental and physical health, and

¹ California Firearm Injury Dashboard (nd). <https://skylab4.cdph.ca.gov/firearm-injuries/>. Firearm and assault injuries in 2022.

² California Firearm Injury Dashboard (nd). <https://skylab4.cdph.ca.gov/firearm-injuries/>. Firearm and assault injuries in 2022 – Victim Race and Ethnicity rates.

³ Barrett, MD, MPH et al., JAMA Pediatrics, *Association of County-Level Poverty and Inequities With Firearm-Related Mortality in US Youth*, (Nov. 22, 2021), available at https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2786452#google_vignette.

vulnerability to future victimization. This bill seeks to address this issue by establishing the Trauma Healing and Resilience Investment for Victimized and Exposed Youth Act pilot grant program (THRIVE) in the Counties of Alameda, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Solano.

The bill is sponsored by Californians for Safety and Justice. The bill is supported by All for Kids, Back to the Start, Drug Policy Alliance, Prosecutors Alliance Action, and Youth Alive!. No timely opposition was received by the Committee. This bill passed the Senate Health Committee 10 to 0.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LAW

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Medi-Cal program, administered by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), which provides medical coverage to low-income persons. (Welf. & Inst. Code §§ 14000 et seq.)
- 2) Establishes the California Victim Compensation Board, which administers the Restitution Fund from which the state, as declared by the Legislature, deems it the public interest to assist residents of the state in obtaining compensation for the pecuniary losses they suffer as a direct result of criminal acts. (Gov. Code §§ 13900 et seq.)
- 3) Provides, pursuant to the California Constitution, that the people have the right of access to information concerning the conduct of the people's business, and, therefore, the meetings of public bodies and the writings of public officials and agencies are required to be open to public scrutiny. (Cal. const. art. I, § 3(b)(1).)
 - a) Requires a statute to be broadly construed if it furthers the people's right of access, and narrowly construed if it limits the right of access. (Cal. const. art. I, § 3(b)(1).)
 - b) Requires a statute that limits the public's right of access to be adopted with findings demonstrating the interest protected by the limitation and the need for protecting that interest. (Cal. const. art. I, § 3(b)(1).)
- 4) Governs the disclosure of information collected and maintained by public agencies pursuant to the CPRA. (Gov. Code §§ 792.000 et seq.)
 - a) States that, the Legislature, mindful of the right of individuals to privacy, finds and declares that access to information concerning the conduct of the people's business is a fundamental and necessary right of every person in this state. (Gov. Code § 7921.000.)
 - b) Defines "public records" as any writing containing information relating to the conduct of the public's business prepared, owned, used, or retained by any

- state or local agency regardless of physical form or characteristics. (Gov. Code § 7920.530.)
 - c) Defines “public agency” as any state or local agency. (Gov. Code § 7920.525(a).)
- 5) Provides that all public records are open to inspection at all times during the office hours of a state or local agency and every person has a right to inspect any public record, unless the record is exempt from public disclosure. Any reasonably segregable portion of a record shall be available for inspection by any person requesting the record after deletion of the portions that are exempted by law. (Gov. Code § 7922.525.)
- a) Some records are prohibited from being disclosed and other records are permissively exempted from being disclosed. (See e.g. Gov. Code §§ 7920.505 & 7922.200.)
 - b) There are several general categories of documents or information that are permissively exempt from disclosure under the CPRA essentially due to the character of the information. The exempt information can be withheld by the public agency with custody of the information, but it also may be disclosed if it is shown that the public’s interest in disclosure outweighs the public’s interest in non-disclosure of the information. (*CBS, Inc. v. Block* (1986) 42 Cal.3d 646, at 652.).

This bill:

- 1) Establishes the Trauma Healing and Resilience Investment for Victimized and Exposed Youth Act pilot grant program, until January 1, 2032, to be administered by DHCS.
 - a) Provides that the Act is only established to the extent that funds are provided for these purposes.
 - b) Requires DHCS to award the Counties of Alameda, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Solano, a grant to establish and administer a program to pay for mental health and counseling services for youth survivors of gun violence who request those services and who reside in those counties, as provided.
- 2) Provides that client information and records of mental health services provided under the Act are confidential and exempt from inspection under the CPRA.
- 3) Provides that the state is immune from any liability resulting from the implementation of this bill.
- 4) Makes findings and declarations relating to the necessity for the limitation on access to public records under the bill.

COMMENTS

1. Stated need for the bill

The author writes:

When young people experience violence, timely support can make the difference between surviving and truly healing. But in California, too many youth, especially those in under-resourced communities, face real barriers to accessing mental health care after trauma. Existing systems are difficult to navigate, slow to respond, and often out of reach when support is needed most. Too many young survivors fall through the cracks. AB 2247 creates more accessible pathways to care by allowing trusted, community-based organizations to directly support youth victims. This bill is about meeting young people where they are and making sure help is available when it matters most.

2. This bill limits access to public records in order to protect the privacy of victims receiving counseling under the pilot program.

Access to information concerning the conduct of the people's business is a fundamental and necessary right of every person in this state. (Gov. Code § 7921.000.) In 2004, the right of public access was enshrined in the California Constitution with the passage of Proposition 59 (Nov. 3, 2004, statewide general election),⁴ which amended the California Constitution to specifically protect the right of the public to access and obtain government records: "The people have the right of access to information concerning the conduct of the people's business, and therefore . . . the writings of public officials and agencies shall be open to public scrutiny." (Cal. Const., art. I, sec. 3 (b)(1).) In 2014, voters approved Proposition 42 (Jun. 3, 2014, statewide direct primary election)⁵ to further increase public access to government records by requiring local agencies to comply with the CPRA and the Ralph M. Brown Act⁶, and with any subsequent statutory enactment amending either act, as provided. (Cal. Const., art. I, sec. 3 (b)(7).)

Under the CPRA, public records are open to inspection by the public at all times during the office hours of the agency, unless exempted from disclosure. (Gov. Code § 7922.252.) A public record is defined as any writing containing information relating to the conduct of the public's business prepared, owned, used, or retained by any public agency regardless of physical form or characteristics. (Gov. Code § 7920.530.) There are several general categories of documents or information that are permissively exempt from

⁴ Prop. 59 was placed on the ballot by a unanimous vote of both houses of the Legislature. (SCA 1 (Burton, Ch. 1, Stats. 2004))

⁵ Prop. 42 was placed on the ballot by a unanimous vote of both houses of the Legislature. (SCA 3 (Leno, Ch. 123, Stats. 2013))

⁶ The Ralph M. Brown Act is the open meetings laws that applies to local agencies. (Gov. Code §§ 59450 et. seq.)

disclosure under the CPRA essentially due to the character of the information. The exempt information can be withheld by the public agency with custody of the information, but it also may be disclosed if it is shown that the public's interest in disclosure outweighs the public's interest in non-disclosure of the information. (*CBS, Inc. v. Block* (1986) 42 Cal.3d 646, at 652.). Additionally, some records are prohibited from disclosure or are specifically stated to not be public records. (*see* Gov. Code § 7924.110(a).)

The bill makes client information and records of mental health services provided under the Act confidential and exempt from disclosure under the CPRA. The bill provides findings and declarations regarding this need for this limitation on access to public records, stating it is necessary to protect the privacy and safety concerns of victims of violent crime, and to provide records relating to private health care services. In light of this stated need, this limitation on access to public records seems warranted.

3. Statements in support

Californians for Safety and Justice, the sponsor of the bill, write in support stating:

In 2022 alone in California, nearly 2,000 children and youth 25 and under were injured or killed by an act of gun violence.⁷ The burden of violent victimization is not borne equally – Black youth in California are victims of gun violence at a rate 21 times that of their white peers, and Latino youth at a rate four times that of white young people.⁸

Lack of support for young people who have experienced trauma can leave lasting impacts, including on school and work, long term mental and physical health, and vulnerability to future victimization. Youth survivors of gun violence are at heightened risk for mental health and substance use issues and need support to recover following violence. But too many young victims of gun violence are not getting the help they need and deserve – a 2023 study found that 3 out of 5 children ages 5 to 18 who are injured by a firearm do not receive mental health services within 6 months following a firearm injury.³ And, a 2019 poll of crime survivors, Californians for Safety and Justice found that 41% of crime victims would have wanted counseling or mental health support but never received it, compared to just 12% who received such help.⁹

⁷ California Firearm Injury Dashboard (nd). <https://skylab4.cdph.ca.gov/firearm-injuries/>. Firearm and assault injuries in 2022.

⁸ California Firearm Injury Dashboard (nd). <https://skylab4.cdph.ca.gov/firearm-injuries/>. Firearm and assault injuries in 2022 – Victim Race and Ethnicity rates.

⁹ Californians for Safety and Justice (2019). California Crime Survivors Speak: A Statewide Survey of California Victims' Views on Safety and Justice.

SUPPORT

Californians for Safety and Justice (sponsor)

All for Kids

Back to the Start

Drug Policy Alliance

Prosecutors Alliance Action

Youth Alive!

OPPOSITION

None received

PRIOR VOTES

Senate Health Committee (Ayes 10, Noes 0)

Assembly Floor (Ayes 58, Noes 17)

Assembly Appropriations Committee (Ayes 11, Noes 4)

Assembly Health Committee (Ayes 12, Noes 4)
