

Date of Hearing: April 22, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 2534 (Kalra) – As Introduced February 20, 2026

Policy Committee: Judiciary Vote: 12 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill incorporates forced marriage as grounds for petitioning the court for a domestic violence restraining order (DVRO) under the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (DVPA).

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Minor and absorbable costs to the Judicial Council for modifying and adopting new forms to incorporate forced marriage into the DVRO process. The Judicial Council requests a one-year delayed implementation to make these changes effectively.
- 2) Unknown but likely minor costs to trial courts (Trial Court Trust Fund) for additional DVRO filings and hearings. According to the Judicial Council, many potential petitioners may already qualify for a DVRO under existing law, so it is unclear how many filings would be entirely new. The Judicial Council notes that DVRO hearings operate on tight statutory timeframes, and additional filings may result in some delays for other civil cases.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author, victims of forced marriage often experience abuse, isolation, financial control, surveillance, and immigration threats from the perpetrator and extended family. While forced marriages are a crime under existing law, many victims lack access to protective measures because they may not qualify for a DVRO under the current statutory framework. This bill ensures that parties to a forced or attempted forced marriage can obtain a DVRO against their perpetrators and others aiding in the coercion.
- 2) **Background.** The DVPA allows people in qualifying relationships to seek a restraining order against another person to protect against abusive behavior. Existing law defines “domestic violence” as abuse against a spouse, cohabitant, dating partner, person with whom the respondent has a child, or a person related by blood within the second degree. Forced marriages pose a complication because the coercion may be coordinated by community members or extended family who do not fall within these existing relationship categories. Additionally, Penal Code Section 265 criminalizes forcing someone to marry, but only captures completed, legally valid marriages — it does not provide protection against attempted or extrajudicial forced marriages. This bill addresses these gaps by creating an explicit pathway for forced marriage victims to obtain DVROs.

- 3) **Support and Opposition.** The Judicial Council raises a significant concern regarding the bill's authorization for courts to issue orders restraining "third parties who knowingly aid or abet" enjoined conduct. The Judicial Council notes that any person subject to a restraining order must receive notice and an opportunity to be heard, and the current "third parties" language makes effective implementation difficult. The Judicial Council recommends that anyone restrained must be named as a party to the case rather than referenced as a third party in an order directed at someone else, and suggests the provision be amended to authorize "orders restraining a party from knowingly aiding or abetting conduct enjoined under this division." The policy committee analysis and the Family Violence Appellate Project raise similar due process concerns.

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