

Date of Hearing: May 13, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 2624 (Bonta) – As Amended April 23, 2026

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|-------------------|---------------------------------|-------|--------|
| Policy Committee: | Privacy and Consumer Protection | Vote: | 11 - 2 |
| | Judiciary | | 9 - 3 |
| | Public Safety | | 7 - 2 |

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

SUMMARY:

This bill establishes a new address confidentiality program within the Secretary of State’s (SOS) Safe at Home program for designated immigration support services providers, employees, volunteers, or recipients who fear for their safety because of their affiliation with a designated immigration support services facility, and establishes online privacy protections enforceable through civil causes of action and criminal penalties.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Authorizes a designated immigration support services provider, employee, or volunteer who is domiciled in California to apply to the SOS for a substitute address to serve as the person's address in public records, with applications filed in person at a community-based assistance program designated by the Secretary of State.
- 2) Requires the SOS to commence accepting applications by July 1, 2027.
- 3) Authorizes the Secretary of State to charge an application fee not to exceed the reasonable costs of enrollment and to assess annual fees to defray maintenance costs and reimburse the General Fund.
- 4) Creates the Address Confidentiality for Immigration Support Services Fund in the General Fund, with monies available upon appropriation.
- 5) Requires state and local agencies to accept the SOS-designated address as the program participant’s substitute address when creating, modifying, or maintaining public records, subject to specified exceptions.
- 6) Designates the SOS as the participant’s agent for service of process and requires the Secretary to forward first-class mail and governmental mail to participants.
- 7) Prohibits a person, business, or association from publicly posting, displaying, disclosing, or distributing on the internet a program participant’s home address or a designated immigration support services provider, employee, or volunteer’s personal information or image, with civil causes of action for injunctive and declarative relief and damages of up to three times actual damages or a minimum of \$4,000 per violation, plus attorney’s fees and court costs.
- 8) Establishes a misdemeanor for falsely attesting on a program application or willfully certifying false material in supporting documentation.

- 9) Establishes criminal penalties of up to \$10,000 and three years imprisonment (or up to \$50,000 and three years if the violation results in bodily injury) for posting personal information or images on the internet with the intent that another person imminently use that information to commit a crime involving violence or a threat of violence.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Ongoing General Fund costs to the Secretary of State (SOS) of approximately \$290,000 in the first year and \$154,000 ongoing to expand the Safe at Home program to immigration support services workers and recipients. According to SOS, costs include staffing to establish new partnerships, deliver training and outreach, develop forms and procedures, update internal systems, and manage an anticipated increase in applications, mail volume, and service requests; modifications to the Safe at Home Salesforce system to add a new applicant category; expansion of the enrollment portal, including purchase and ongoing maintenance of additional user licenses; and printing, translation, postage for mail forwarding and regulatory updates.
- 2) Cost pressures (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund) of an unknown but potentially significant amount to the courts to adjudicate civil cases and criminal charges resulting from this bill. Actual costs will depend on the number of cases filed and the amount of court time needed to resolve each case. A defendant charged with a misdemeanor or felony is entitled to a jury trial and, if the defendant is indigent, legal representation provided by the government. It generally costs approximately \$1,000 to operate a courtroom for one hour. Although courts are not funded on the basis of workload, increased pressure on the Trial Court Trust Fund may create a demand for increased funding for courts from the General Fund. The state budget provides annual General Fund backfills to the Trial Court Trust Fund to offset revenue reductions, totaling approximately \$117.3 million in 2025-26.
- 3) Incarceration costs (local funds, General Fund) to the counties and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Actual incarceration costs will depend on the number of convictions, the length of each sentence, and whether each sentence must be served in county jail or state prison. The average annual cost to incarcerate one person in county jail is approximately \$29,000, though costs are higher in larger counties. The Legislative Analyst's Office estimates the average annual cost to incarcerate one person in state prison is \$128,000; CDCR estimates \$135,921. County incarceration costs are not subject to reimbursement by the state. However, overcrowding in county jails creates cost pressure on the General Fund because the state has historically granted new funding to counties to offset overcrowding resulting from public safety realignment.

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:

AB 2624 strengthens protections for individuals working in immigrant service roles, including nonprofit staff, volunteers, and legal services providers, who may face risks such as doxxing, harassment, or threats due to the nature of their work. By extending Safe at Home Program

protections, the bill allows eligible participants to keep their personal information confidential in public records.

- 2) **Background.** The SOS’s Safe at Home address confidentiality program, established by SB 489 (Alpert), Chapter 1005, Statutes of 1998, was originally created to allow victims of domestic violence and stalking to obtain a substitute mailing address designated by the Secretary of State for use in public records, with the Secretary acting as the participant’s agent for service of process and forwarding mail. The program has been expanded over time to cover survivors of additional crimes (sexual assault, human trafficking, child abduction, elder or dependent adult abuse), reproductive health care providers, employees, volunteers, and patients (AB 797 (Shelley), Chapter 380, Statutes of 2002); public-entity employees facing threats from the public because of their work (AB 1131 (Newman), Chapter 554, Statutes of 2022); and gender-affirming care providers, employees, volunteers, and patients (AB 82 (Ward), Chapter 679, Statutes of 2025). This bill establishes a new chapter parallel to the reproductive and gender-affirming care framework for designated immigration support services providers, employees, recipients, and volunteers.

The bill creates civil causes of action for unauthorized posting, display, disclosure, distribution, solicitation, sale, or trading of a program participant's personal information or image, and establishes criminal penalties for posting personal information or images on the internet with the intent that another person imminently use that information to commit a crime involving violence or a threat of violence. These provisions parallel existing Government Code sections governing reproductive health care providers.

The Assembly Public Safety Committee analysis discusses the “true threats” doctrine under the First Amendment, including *Counterman v. Colorado* (2023) 143 S.Ct. 2106, and notes that the breadth of who qualifies as a designated immigration support services provider, employee, or volunteer may raise as-applied challenge concerns where the defendant commits a crime but the victim’s status as a covered person is incidental to the offense. To the extent the bill is challenged in court, any defense costs would be borne by the Department of Justice.

- 3) **Support and Opposition.** Co-sponsors Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA) and Women’s Foundation California, Solis Policy Institute write that immigrant support providers face heightened risk in the current political climate, with many experiencing harassment, threats, doxxing, and targeted intimidation, and that current law does not offer these individuals the same confidentiality protections as other groups under the Safe at Home Program. The bill is supported by a coalition of immigrants’ rights advocates, civil rights organizations, labor unions, legal services organizations, and nonprofit organizations. The California Baptists for Biblical Values and the California Baptist Capitol Ministry oppose the bill, writing that the address confidentiality program and associated penalties for sharing personal information would deter investigative journalism and accountability efforts.