

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

AB 2783 (Committee on Judiciary)

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Fiscal: Yes

Urgency: Yes

AWM

SUBJECT

Court reporting

DIGEST

This bill permits an applicant to satisfy the diction/transcription component of their examination for certification as a shorthand reporter by the Court Reporters Board of California (CRB) through completion of a certification administered by the National Court Reporter Association, and extends the termination and sunset dates for the ongoing remote reporting pilot projects in specified superior courts, on an urgency basis.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Generally speaking, only a certified shorthand court reporter may take down the verbatim record of a court proceeding for the creation of the official transcript. A court reporter may be certified to take down the proceedings through typographic or shorthand means or through voicewriting. Current law mostly requires the official court reporter to be present in the courtroom while taking down the record of the proceedings; however, in 2024, the Legislature enacted AB 3013 (Maienschein, Ch. 250, Stats. 2024), which authorized superior courts in 13 counties to implement pilot projects to test remote court reporting, as defined. To date, five superior courts have implemented pilot projects under AB 3013, and information received by Committee staff indicates that experiences with remote reporting are generally positive.

This bill extends the duration of the pilot projects authorized by AB 3013 from July 1, 2026, to July 1, 2028, and extends the sunset date on AB 3013 to January 1, 2029. The bill also modifies AB 3013's reporting requirements to, among other things, require the Judicial Council to present its report on the pilot projects to the Legislature by January 1, 2027. The bill also extends reciprocity to a certification administered by the National Court Reporter Association for purposes of the court reporter examination; this issue will be considered by the Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development

Committee. The bill contains an urgency clause because the AB 3013 pilot authorization is set to expire in July of this year.

This bill is sponsored by the California Court Reporters Association and is supported by the Judicial Council of California, the Los Angeles County Court Reporters Association, SEIU California, the Superior Court of Los Angeles County, and one individual. This bill is opposed by Emerald Deposition Reporters, Kuziora Deposition Reporters, Protect Your Record Project, and 16 individuals. If this Committee passes this bill, it will be referred to the Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development Committee.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LAW

Existing law:

- 1) Provides that an official court reporter or official court reporter pro tempore¹ of the superior court shall take down in shorthand all testimony, objections made, rulings of the court, exceptions taken, arraignments, pleas, sentences, arguments of the attorneys to the jury, and statements and remarks made and oral instructions given by the judge or other judicial officer, in the following cases:
 - a) In a civil case, on the order of the court or at the request of a party.
 - b) In a felony case, on the order of the court or at the request of the prosecution, the defendant, or the attorney for the defendant.
 - c) In a misdemeanor or infraction case, on the order of the court. (Code Civ. Proc., § 269(a).)
- 2) Requires the court to provide an official court reporter in felony, dependency, and juvenile justice proceedings. (Pen. Code, §§ 190.9, 869; Welf. & Inst. Code, §§ 347, 677.)
- 3) Provides that no person shall be appointed to the position of official court reporter of any court unless the person has first obtained a license to practice as a certified shorthand reporter from the CRB. (Gov. Code, § 69942.)
- 4) Establishes the requirements for obtaining a certified shorthand reporter license from the CRB, including passing an examination that consists of three divisible parts testing for English, professional practice, and dictation/transcription (machine/skill). (Gov. Code, §§ 8020, 8020.5.)
- 5) Provides that the dictation/transcription (machine/skill) portion of the examination under 4) may be satisfied by the successful completion of the Certified Verbatim Reporter or Certified Verbatim Reporter-Stenotype certification administered through the National Verbatim Reporters Association. (Gov. Code, § 8020.5(g).)

¹ Going forward, this analysis uses “official court reporter” to include “official court reporter pro tempore.”

- 6) Provides that, in a limited civil, misdemeanor, or infraction case, if an official court reporter is unavailable to report an action or proceeding in a court, the court may order the action or proceeding to be electronically recorded for purposes of creating the verbatim record, provided that the court has the approved equipment for doing so. (Gov. Code, § 69957(a).)
- 7) Defines “remote court reporting” as the use of a stenographic reporter who is not present in the courtroom to produce a verbatim record of court proceedings that are transmitted by audiovisual means to the reporter. (Gov. Code, § 69959(b).)
- 8) Provides that remote court reporting shall not be used by the courts to make the record of any court proceedings, and courts shall not expend any funds to purchase equipment or software to facilitate the use of remote court reporting. (Gov. Code, § 69959(a).)
- 9) Permits, notwithstanding 8), the Superior Courts for the Counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles, Mendocino, Monterey, Orange, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Tulare, and Ventura to conduct pilot projects, beginning July 1, 2025, to study the potential use of remote court reporting to make the verbatim record of certain court proceedings, subject to specified labor and technology conditions. (Gov. Code, § 69959.5(b).)
- 10) Requires each participating superior court to submit data and information to the Judicial Council on the results of a pilot project conducted under 9), including feedback from specified persons who participated, and requires the Judicial Council to compile the results and prepare a report for the Legislature within six months of the completion of the pilot project. (Gov. Code, § 69959.5(b), (c).)
- 11) Requires all pilot projects conducted pursuant to 9) to terminate no later than July 1, 2026, or earlier if a participating superior court determines that the use of remote court reporting is prejudicing the rights of litigants or the interests of justice; and repeals the pilot project’s authorizing statute as of June 1, 2027. (Gov. Code, § 69959.5(c).)

This bill:

- 1) Provides that an applicant for a certified shorthand court reporter license may satisfy the dictation/transcription (machine/skill) portion of their examination requirement through successful completion of the Registered Professional Reporter certification administered through the National Court Reporters Association.
- 2) Modifies the reporting requirements for courts participating in the pilot project as follows:

- a) Specifies that the Los Angeles, Mendocino, San Bernardino, San Mateo, and Tulare Superior Courts must submit data and information to the Judicial Council on the results of their pilot projects.
 - b) Eliminates categories of persons whose feedback must be included in each court's report.
 - c) Requires the Judicial Council's report to the Legislature to be submitted no later than January 1, 2027.
- 3) Extends the termination date for a superior court's authorized remote reporting pilot project to July 1, 2028.
 - 4) Extends the sunset date on the remote reporting pilot project statute to January 1, 2029.
 - 5) Includes an urgency clause.
 - 6) Makes nonsubstantive and technical conforming changes.

COMMENTS

1. Author's comment

According to the author:

This bill makes two changes to the law governing court reporters. First, existing law establishes the Court Reporters Board of California for the purpose of licensing court reporters and requires a person applying for a license to pass a three-part certification exam, one of which is labeled Dictation/Transcription. Presently, an applicant must pass either the Certified Verbatim Reporter (CVR) or the Certified Verbatim-Stenotype (CVR-S) certification exam, administered by the National Verbatim Reporters Association, to satisfy the Dictation/Transcription part of the exam. This bill adds completion of the Registered Professional Reporter (RPR) certification, administered by the National Court Reporter Association, to the list of certifications that satisfy the Dictation/Transcription component. Increased reciprocity with the national court reporter exams will

Second, existing law also establishes a pilot project authorizing the superior courts in thirteen counties to study the potential use of remote court reporting to make the verbatim record of certain court proceedings. Existing law provides that the pilot projects shall terminate no later than July 1, 2026, and further requires the Judicial Council to prepare a report for the Legislature with the results from each participating superior court. That project is set to terminate on July 1, 2026. This bill extends the termination date for the pilot project until July 8, 2028, so that the study may be fully completed and the Judicial Council report prepared. Because the

existing project will terminate before the bill would otherwise become effective, an urgency clause is added in this Committee.

2. Background on the state of court reporting in California

As a general rule, the official record of a court proceeding can be made only by a shorthand reporter licensed to practice by the CRB.² To obtain a license, a person must pass a three-part exam and, generally, graduate from a state-approved school that takes four years to graduate.³ One portion of the exam, which tests the applicant's dictation and transcription skills, can be satisfied through the successful completion of the Certified Verbatim Reporter or Certified Verbatim Reporter-Stenotype certification administered through the National Verbatim Reporters Association.⁴

Felony, dependency, and juvenile justice proceedings are automatically reported;⁵ in civil trials, any party may request that a court reporter make a record of the proceedings.⁶ Additionally, if a party in a civil case has a fee waiver, the court must make a court reporter available for that litigant, even if the court does not otherwise provide court reporters for that case type.⁷ There are exceptions to the rule requiring the record to be made by an official court reporter: in a limited civil, misdemeanor, or infraction case, the court may authorize the proceeding to be electronically recorded and transcribed after the fact by a person designated by the clerk of the court.⁸

After years of debate over how to provide litigants with better access to a verbatim record, stakeholders took two significant steps in 2024.

First, the Legislature enacted AB 3013 (Maienschein, Ch. 250, Stats. 2024), which authorizes the Superior Courts in the Counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles, Mendocino, Monterey, Orange, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Tulare, and Ventura to conduct pilot projects into remote court reporting, i.e., court reporting in which the reporter is not physically present in the courtroom.⁹ A participating court must comply with specified labor and technology requirements, and must terminate the pilot project if the court determines that the use of remote court reporting is prejudicing the rights of litigants or the interests of justice.¹⁰ All authorized

² Code Civ. Proc., § 269; Gov. Code, §§ 69941, 69942, 69957.

³ Commission on the Future of California's Court System, Report to the Chief Justice (2017), Appendix 5.1C, p. 262.

⁴ Gov. Code, § 8020.5(g).

⁵ Pen. Code, §§ 190.9, 869; Welf. & Inst. Code, §§ 347, 677.

⁶ Code Civ. Proc., § 369(a.)

⁷ *Jameson v. Desta*, 5 Cal.5th 594, 623.

⁸ Gov. Code, § 69975(a); Cal. Rules of Ct., r. 2.952(g.)

⁹ Gov. Code, § 69959.5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

remote court reporting pilot projects must be completed by July 1, 2026, and the authorizing statute is set to sunset on June 1, 2027.¹¹

Second, in December 2024, the Family Violence Appellate Project and Bay Area Legal Aid filed a writ of mandate and/or prohibition in the California Supreme Court, naming the Superior Courts for the Counties of Contra Costa, Los Angeles, Santa Clara, and San Diego as respondents, seeking an order holding that the prohibition on the use of electronic recording for the creation of a verbatim record does not bar the use of electronic recording when a court reporter is unavailable.¹² The Court heard oral argument in the proceeding on June 3, 2026, and the case was submitted on that date.¹³ At the time this analysis was released, the Court has yet to release its opinion.

3. This bill extends the remote court reporting pilot project and modifies the certification requirements for court reporter licensure

According to stakeholders, the superior courts in 5 of the 13 authorized counties – Los Angeles, Mendocino, San Bernardino, San Mateo, and Tulare – have commenced remote reporting pilot projects authorized by AB 3013. Feedback provided to Committee staff is uniformly positive, however, stakeholders believe that additional time is necessary to gather data on the best remote reporting practices. This bill, therefore, extends the authorization for remote reporting pilot projects by two years, to July 1, 2028. Because the authorization for the pilot project is currently set to terminate on July 1, 2026, this bill includes an urgency clause.

The bill also modifies the data-gathering and reporting requirements to reflect the extended timeline and the counties that have implemented pilot projects. Under the bill, only the five courts that have already commenced pilot projects will be required to submit data to the Judicial Council, and Judicial Council’s final report to the Legislature must be submitted on or before January 1, 2027, rather than after the conclusion of the pilots. By moving up the date, this bill will give the Legislature more accurate information in advance of the mid-2028 pilot project expiration date.

In addition to the above, this bill adds to the list of nationally developed court reporter certifications that an applicant for licensure from the CRB may complete in lieu of one portion of the required court reporter examination. The Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development Committee, which is the second committee of referral for this bill, will consider this issue.

¹¹ *Id.*, § 69959.5(c).

¹² See Petition, *Family Violence Appellate Project v. Superior Court* (filed Dec. 5, 2024) California Supreme Court Case No. S288176, p. 15.

¹³ See Docket, *Family Violence Appellate Project v. Superior Court*, California Supreme Court Case No. S288176.

4. Arguments in support

According to the California Court Reporters Association

Since fiscal year 2022-23, there has been a 230.8% increase in new licensees, and these numbers are expected to grow in the years ahead. While these trends are positive, the California Court Reporters Association remains committed to taking additional measures to grow the profession and improve access to justice.

AB 2783 represents our continued commitment to growth. The bill aligns the state with national standards and advances access to justice for all Californians by expanding opportunities for additional court reporters to enter the workforce sooner, by both supporting current RPR certificate holders but also strengthening the pipeline of future reporters, without weakening the state's rigorous professional standards. This bill will not make any changes to passing scores or knowledge testing, and all applicants will still be required to pass the English and Professional Practice portions of the exam within three consecutive years.

According to the Superior Court of Los Angeles County:

The Superior Court of Los Angeles County launched its Remote Official Court Reporter Pilot on July 1, 2025, in select Probate, Family Law, and Juvenile Dependency courtrooms. The program enables official court reporters to work remotely from designated courthouse offices across the county. Participating courtrooms are equipped with livestream audio and video technology, allowing participants to see and hear one another through LACourtConnect, the Court's free remote proceedings platform.

Currently, up to ten percent of the Court's official reporters, or about twenty reporters, provide remote coverage in equipped courtrooms. Remote reporting capabilities are now in place in fifty-two courtrooms across the county. From July 1, 2025, through March 31, 2026, reporters covered 40,107 proceedings remotely, demonstrating strong demand and reliable performance. Reporters and judicial officers receive structured training supported by videos, guides, and checklists, and SEIU representatives have participated in training and feedback to ensure labor considerations are incorporated.

In conjunction with the Court's ongoing efforts to hire additional official court reporters, the pilot program has expanded court reporter coverage in family law and probate courtrooms. Early results indicate that remote reporting increases coverage, maintains accuracy, and supports timely access to justice, particularly in high-volume calendars, where coverage gaps can significantly impact litigants.

5. Arguments in opposition

According to Protect Your Record Project:

Our concern with this bill applies to the section to allow the Registered Professional Reporter (RPR) exam to be used in place of taking the current California Certified Shorthand Reporter (CSR) exam. The ultimate outcome of this bill will take remote work away from California constituents and increase work for out-of-state workers who have not qualified through the CSR exam. Reciprocity with the RPR will not help with coverage of in-person court reporting assignments in California. Almost all RPR certificate holders who want reciprocity will be domiciled outside of California

As of this letter, the National Court Reporters Association states they have 4,776 Registered Professional Reporters (RPRs). The potential impact to California Certified Shorthand Reporters being displaced would be significant. This would displace the remote work of your constituents and move the work out of state to court reporters who have not passed our California standards.

SUPPORT

California Court Reporters Association (co-sponsor)
Judicial Council of California
Los Angeles County Court Reporters Association
SEIU California
Superior Court of Los Angeles County
One individual

OPPOSITION

Emerald Deposition Reporters
Kuziora Deposition Reporters
Protect Your Record Project
16 individuals

RELATED LEGISLATION

Pending legislation: AB 882 (Papan, 2025) authorizes a superior court to use electronic recording technology in specified civil case types, when specified conditions are met, when no court reporter is available and the litigant cannot afford to retain a private court reporter. AB 882 is pending before this Committee.

Prior legislation:

AB 1189 (Lackey, 2026) would have provided for the certification of digital reporters by the Court Reporters Board, as specified, and permitted a certified digital reporter to, among other things, swear in witnesses and capture the record in a legal proceeding. AB 1189 died in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.

AB 3013 (Maienschein, Ch. 250, Stats. 2024) authorized specified superior courts, beginning July 1, 2025, to conduct pilot projects to study the potential use of remote court reporting to make the verbatim record of certain court proceedings. AB 3013 is discussed further in Comment 2 of this analysis.

SB 662 (Rubio, 2023) would have authorized a court to electronically record any civil case, for the purpose of creating the official record, provided that no official reporter is available, as specified; and would have allowed the CRB to issue provisional certificates to shorthand reporters who meet certain criteria. SB 662 died in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 253 (Mark Stone, Ch. 419, Stats. 2019) explicitly prohibited the use of remote court reporting to make the record of any court proceeding, and established a pilot program in the Superior Court for the County of Santa Clara to conduct a one-year remote court reporting pilot.

PRIOR VOTES

Assembly Floor (Ayes 78, Noes 0)
Assembly Appropriations Committee (Ayes 15, Noes 0)
Assembly Judiciary Committee (Ayes 12, Noes 0)
