
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 486 (Lackey) - Crimes: burglary tools

Version: June 18, 2025

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 18, 2025

Policy Vote: PUB. S. 6 - 0

Mandate: Yes

Consultant: Liah Burnley

Bill Summary: AB 486 makes possession of a key programming device, a key duplicating device, and a signal extender with the intent to commit burglary a misdemeanor.

Fiscal Impact:

- Unknown, potentially significant costs to the state funded trial court system (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund) to adjudicate the crimes created by this bill. Defendants are constitutionally guaranteed certain rights during criminal proceedings, including the right to a jury trial and the right to counsel (at public expense if the defendants are unable to afford the costs of representation). Increasing penalties leads to lengthier and more complex court proceedings with attendant workload and resource costs to the court. The fiscal impact of this bill to the courts will depend on many unknowns, including the numbers of people charged with an offense and the factors unique to each case. An eight-hour court day costs approximately \$10,500 in staff in workload. This is a conservative estimate, based on the hourly rate of court personnel including at minimum the judge, clerk, bailiff, court reporter, jury administrator, administrative staff, and jury per-diems. If court days exceed 10, costs to the trial courts could reach hundreds of thousands of dollars. While the courts are not funded on a workload basis, an increase in workload could result in delayed court services and would put pressure on the General Fund to fund additional staff and resources and to increase the amount appropriated to backfill for trial court operations.
- Unknown, potentially significant costs (local funds, General Fund) to the counties to incarcerate people for the crime created by this bill. The average annual cost to incarcerate one person in county jail varies by county, but likely ranges from \$70,000 to \$90,000 per year. For example, in 2021, Los Angeles County budgeted \$1.3 billion for jail spending, including \$89,580 per incarcerated person. Actual incarceration costs to counties will depend on the number of convictions and the length of each sentence. Generally, county incarceration costs are not reimbursable state mandates pursuant to Proposition 30 (2012).

Background: According to the author: "Criminals are using advanced key programming devices to steal vehicles in seconds - fueling crime and putting the public at risk. AB 486 updates California law to treat these devices as burglary tools when possessed without a lawful purpose, giving law enforcement a critical tool to combat rising auto theft. This bill updates our laws to keep pace with this evolving threat, and

takes additional steps to keep Californians safe.”

Opponents of this bill argue that it is unnecessary, contending: “AB 486 adds to a problematic portion of the Penal Code. The bill adds to the Penal Code Section 466’s list of “burglary tools” which can land someone a misdemeanor conviction for possessing the tool with criminal intent – a list that includes “screwdriver[s]”. No law should criminalize possession based solely on what police or prosecutors believe is happening in the owner’s mind. Moreover, no person should face criminal liability for their thoughts alone.”

Proposed Law:

- Makes it a misdemeanor to possess a key programming device or key duplicating device, signal extender with the intent to feloniously break or enter into any building or vehicle, or to knowingly make or alter such an instrument, knowing or having reason to believe that it is intended to be used in the commission of a misdemeanor or felony.
- Defines the following:
 - “Key programming device” or “key duplicating device” as any device with the capability to access a vehicle’s onboard computer to allow additional keys to be made, delete keys, or remotely start the vehicle without the use of any key. A key duplicating device also includes any device with the ability to capture a key code or signal in order to remotely access a vehicle; and,
 - “Signal extender” as a key fob amplifier or other device that extends the signal range of a keyless entry car fob to send a coded signal to a receiver in a vehicle to lock, unlock, access a vehicle, start the engine, or interact with other remote commands associated to the vehicle’s onboard computer.

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