
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 686 (Berman) - Elections: deceptive audio or visual media

Version: June 9, 2026

Policy Vote: B., P. & E.D. 9 - 0, JUD. 11 - 0, E. & C.A. 4 - 1

Urgency: No

Mandate: No

Hearing Date: August 13, 2026

Consultant: Robert Ingenito

Bill Summary: AB 686 would extend the sunset date, from January 1, 2027 to January 1, 2031, for the law prohibiting a person, committee, or other entity from distributing materially deceptive audio or visual deepfakes of a candidate for election with actual malice and the intent to injure the candidate's reputation or to deceive a voter into voting for or against the candidate within 60 days of an election at which a candidate for elective office will appear on the ballot, as specified, and unless certain conditions are met.

******* ANALYSIS ADDENDUM – SUSPENSE FILE *******

**The following information is revised to reflect amendments
adopted by the committee on August 13, 2026**

Fiscal Impact: By authorizing a claim by specified individuals and entities to enjoin distribution of a prohibited communication and seek damages, this bill may result in an increased number of civil actions that also receive precedence when filed in court. Consequently, the bill could result in potentially significant cost pressures to the courts; the magnitude is unknown (Trial Court Trust Fund (TCTF)). The specific number of new actions that could be filed under the bill also is unknown; however, it generally costs about \$10,500 per day to operate a courtroom. Courts are not funded on the basis of workload, and increased pressure on TCTF may create a need for increased funding for courts from the General Fund. The enacted 2026-27 budget includes \$70 million in ongoing support from the General Fund to continue to backfill TCTF for revenue declines.

Committee Amendments: Add Senator Cervantes as a coauthor.

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