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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair  
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

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### SB 1330 (Arreguín) - Assault and battery: utility workers

**Version:** February 20, 2026

**Urgency:** No

**Hearing Date:** April 20, 2026

**Policy Vote:** PUB. S. 6 - 0

**Mandate:** Yes

**Consultant:** Bob Franzoia

**Bill Summary:** SB 1330 would increase the punishment for assault and battery committed against a public utility employee or a worker engaged in essential infrastructure work, as defined, while engaged in the performance of their duties.

**Fiscal Impact:** Trial Courts: Unknown, potentially significant cost to the state fund court system (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund) to adjudicate criminal penalties 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). Creating new crimes, with increased penalties, could lead 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 unknown factors, 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. 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. The Governor's 2026-27 budget proposes \$70 million from the General Fund to help pay for increased trial court operation costs.

**Incarceration:** Unknown, potentially significant costs (local funds, General Fund) to the counties to incarcerate people who are convicted of this offense for a longer period of time. The average annual cost to incarcerate one person in county jail is approximately \$80,000 per year. Actual incarceration costs to counties will depend on the number of convictions and the length of each sentence. Although county incarceration costs are generally not considered reimbursable state mandates pursuant to Proposition 30 (2012), 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 2011 public safety realignment.

**Local Supervision:** Unknown, potentially significant costs (local funds, General Fund) to county probation departments if individuals convicted of the expanded crimes created by this bill are supervised locally in the community in lieu of or in addition to incarceration. In each criminal case, county probation departments conduct investigations to provide presentencing reports to the courts after a conviction, supervise people in the community to ensure they comply with the terms of their supervision, and refer people to programs intended to help them avoid committing new

crimes and improve their lives. Annual supervision costs could range from approximately \$4,000 to \$15,000 per person. Actual costs would depend on the cost of supervision by each county probation department and how many individuals are granted probation, mandatory supervision or post release community supervision for the offense. According to the LAO, the state has typically provided counties with additional funding when state policy changes temporarily increase the post-release community supervision and probation populations. To the extent that defendants are able to avail themselves to drug courts, collaborative courts, and diversion programs as a result of a charge under this bill, there will be corresponding increases in workload and costs pressures to probation, county behavioral health services, district attorneys, and public defenders. Local costs to comply with this measure would be subject to reimbursement by the state to the extent that the Commission on State Mandates determines that this bill imposes a state-mandated local program.

**Proposed Law:** This bill includes utility workers engaged in essential infrastructure work in the list of professions which receive elevated penalties for assaults and batteries when:

- The victim is engaged in the performance of their duties; and,
- The perpetrator knows or reasonably should know that the victim is a utility worker engaged in essential infrastructure work.

This bill makes such an assault or battery punishable by imprisonment in a county jail not exceeding one year, by a fine not exceeding \$2,000, or by both.

This bill defines utility worker to mean:

- A person employed by, or who is a contractor to, an investor-owned or publicly owned water corporation, electrical corporation, gas corporation, electric cooperative, local publicly owned electric utility or a public water system that performs services for or delivers a commodity to the public and the service performed is the construction, alteration, demolition, installation, maintenance, or repair of water, electrical, or gas infrastructure.

**Related Legislation:** SB 431 (Arreguín) 2025 relating to assault and battery on utility workers has substantially the same fiscal impact as this bill. SB 431 was held in Assembly Appropriations.

**Staff Comments:** Bills that establish victim-specific elevated assault and battery penalties have been vetoed on several occasions in recent years on the basis that the conduct can already be prosecuted, additional jail time for batteries and assaults is unlikely to improve public safety, and creating more distinct assault and battery crimes unnecessarily adds to the length and complexity of the Penal Code.