

Date of Hearing: June 30, 2026

Counsel: Ilan Zur

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Nick Schultz, Chair

SB 1330 (Arreguín) – As Amended May 14, 2026

**SUMMARY:** Expands the list of professions for which an assault or battery of a person in that profession carries elevated misdemeanor penalties to include utility workers, as defined.

Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Includes utility workers engaged in the performance of their duties in the list of professions against whom an assault or battery conviction carries elevated criminal penalties.
- 2) Makes an assault of, or battery against, a utility worker engaged in the performance of their duties, where the perpetrator knows or reasonably should know the victim is such a utility worker engaged in the performance of their duties, punishable by imprisonment of up to one year in county jail, up to a \$2,000 fine, or by both.
- 3) 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, as defined, or a public water system, as defined, that performs services for or delivers a commodity to the public or any portion thereof and the service performed by the person is the construction, alteration, demolition, installation, maintenance, or repair of water, electrical, or gas infrastructure.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Defines “assault” as an unlawful attempt, coupled with a present ability, to inflict a violent injury upon another person, and makes the offense punishable by up to six months in county jail, up to a \$1,000 fine, or by both. (Pen. Code, §§ 240 & 241, subd. (a).)
- 2) Makes an assault upon another by any means of force likely to produce great bodily injury an alternate felony-misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in county jail, by two, three, or four years in state prison, or by up to a \$10,000 fine, or by both the fine and imprisonment. (Pen. Code, § 245, subd. (a)(4).)
- 3) Provides that when an assault is committed against a peace officer, firefighter, emergency medical technician, lifeguard, process server, traffic officer, code enforcement officer, animal control officer, or search and rescue member engaged in the performance of their duties, or a physician or nurse engaged in rendering emergency medical care outside a hospital, clinic, or other health care facility, or a physician, nurse, or other health care worker of a hospital engaged in providing services within the emergency department, and the person committing the offense knows or reasonably should know of the victim’s above status, the assault is punishable by up to one year in county jail, up to a \$2,000 fine, or by both. (Pen. Code, § 241, subd. (c).)

- 4) Defines “battery” as any willful and unlawful use of force or violence upon another person, and makes the offense punishable by up to six months in the county jail, up to a \$2,000 fine, or by both. (Pen. Code, §§ 242 & 243, subd. (a).)
- 5) Provides that when a battery is committed against a peace officer, custodial officer, firefighter, emergency medical technician, lifeguard, security officer, custody assistant, process server, traffic officer, code enforcement officer, animal control officer, or search and rescue member engaged in the performance of their duties, whether on or off duty, a nonsworn employee of a probation department engaged in the performance of their duties, whether on or off duty, or a physician or nurse engaged in rendering emergency medical care outside a hospital, clinic, or other health care facility, or a physician, nurse, or other health care worker of a hospital engaged in providing services within the emergency department, and the person committing the offense knows, or reasonably should know, of the victim’s above status, the offense is punishable by up to one year in county jail, up to a \$2,000 fine, or by both. (Pen. Code, § 243, subd. (b).)
- 6) Provides that when a battery is committed against a custodial officer, firefighter, emergency medical technician, lifeguard, process server, traffic officer, animal control officer, or a nonsworn employee of a probation department engaged in the performance of their duties, whether on or off duty, or a physician or nurse engaged in rendering emergency medical care outside a hospital, clinic, or other health care facility, and the person committing the offense knows or reasonably should know of the victim’s above status, and an injury is inflicted on that victim, the offense is punishable by up to one year in county jail, by a fine of up to a \$2,000, or by both, or by imprisonment in county jail for 16 months, two, or three years. (Pen. Code, § 243, subd. (c).)
- 7) Makes an assault or battery committed against a “highway worker,” as defined, that is engaged in the performance of their duties and the perpetrator knows or reasonably should know the victim is a highway worker engaged in the performance of their duties, punishable by up to one year in county jail, up to a \$2,000 fine, or by both. (Pen. Code, §§ 241.5, 243.65.)
- 8) Makes a battery where serious bodily injury is inflicted upon the victim an alternate-misdemeanor felony punishable by up to one year in the county jail, or by two, three, or four years in the county jail. (Pen. Code, § 243, subd. (d).)
- 9) Punishes any person who personally inflicts great bodily injury on any person other than an accomplice in the commission, or attempted commission, of a felony by an additional and consecutive term of three years. (Pen. Code, § 12022.7, subd. (a).)
- 10) Defines the following terms:
  - a) “Local publicly owned electric utility” means a specified municipality or municipal corporation operating as a “public utility” furnishing electric service, a specified municipal utility district furnishing electric service, a specified public utility district furnishing electric services, a specified irrigation district furnishing electric services, or a joint powers authority that includes one or more of these agencies and that owns generation or transmission facilities, or furnishes electric services over its own or its member’s electric distribution system. (Pub. Util. Code § 224.3)

- b) “Public water system” means a system for the provision of water for human consumption through pipes or other constructed conveyances that has 15 or more service connections or regularly serves an average of at least 25 individuals daily at least 60 days out of the year, as specified. (Health & Saf. Code, § 116275, subd. (h).)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) **Sponsor:** International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 1245
- 2) **Author's Statement:** According to the author, “Our public utility workers play an important role in maintaining the infrastructure that communities rely on every day, including electricity and water services. While performing this essential work in the field, utility workers have reported incidents of harassment and assault that often create unsafe and stressful work environments, further complicating their ability to perform their duties. At least for one major utility employer, since 2022, 81 incidents have occurred in which weapons were brandished at their employees during work operations in the field. Like other classes of workers who already have protections against assault or battery under the State Penal Code (e.g. police officer, firefighter, nurse or doctor), public utility workers equally face threats to their safety when performing their essential work. SB 1330 seeks to provide our utility workers these same protections, ensuring that they can perform their work and service the public without fear.”
- 3) **Need for this Bill:** There have been numerous incidents in recent years in which utility workers experienced violence and harassment while performing their duties. In 2019, a Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) employee was allegedly shot at by a pellet gun during a period in which surrounding customers were experiencing planned power outages.<sup>1</sup> In 2021, an individual allegedly yelled racial slurs and physically assaulted a San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) worker who informed drivers that a road was closed due to an SDG&E roadblock.<sup>2</sup> This individual was apprehended and subject to hate crime and battery charges.<sup>3</sup> In 2022, an individual stabbed a PG&E worker who was marking gas lines.<sup>4</sup> That individual was arrested for attempted homicide.<sup>5</sup> Most recently, following the Palisades fire, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) reported that an individual drove up to an LADWP employee who was working on a downed electrical pole and threatened them with bodily harm.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ABC News, *They're your neighbors': CEO of PG&E defends crew allegedly attacked with pellet gun in Glenn County* (Oct. 23, 2019) <https://abc7news.com/power-outage-shut-off-pge-map-website-down/5642269/> [As of June 3, 2026].

<sup>2</sup> Matt Meyer, *Man charged with hate crime, accused of racist tirade at SDG&E worker* (March 4, 2022) <https://fox5sandiego.com/news/local-news/man-charged-with-hate-crime-accused-of-racist-tirade-at-sdge-worker/> [As of June 3, 2026].

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Daily Journal, *Utility worker stabbed, suspect arrested for attempted murder in South San Francisco* (June 14, 2022), [https://www.smdailyjournal.com/news/local/utility-worker-stabbed-suspect-arrested-for-attempted-murder-in-south-san-francisco/article\\_6dd1b602-eb97-11ec-8c34-6fcfb6d4b323.html](https://www.smdailyjournal.com/news/local/utility-worker-stabbed-suspect-arrested-for-attempted-murder-in-south-san-francisco/article_6dd1b602-eb97-11ec-8c34-6fcfb6d4b323.html) [As of June 3, 2026].

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Winton and Smith, *DWP says workers have been threatened with bodily harm, and possibly, a rifle* (Jan. 15, 2025) <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-01-15/threats-to-los-angeles-dwp-workers> [As of June 3, 2026].

- 4) **Effect of this Bill:** An assault is “an unlawful attempt, coupled with a present ability, to commit a violent injury on the person of another.” (Pen. Code, § 240.) A battery is “any willful and unlawful use of force or violence upon the person of another.” (Pen. Code, § 242.) “[S]imple assault’ is included in the offense of battery,’ and ‘[a] conviction of the latter would subsume the assault. By definition one cannot commit battery without also committing a ‘simple’ assault, which is nothing more than an attempted battery. (*People v. Fuller* (1975) 53 Cal.App.3d 417, 421, citations omitted.) An example of an assault is swinging at another person without hitting them, whereas striking the other person is a battery. Simple assault and battery are both misdemeanors punishable by up to six months in the county jail, a fine, or both (Pen. Code, §§ 241, subd. (a), 243, subd. (a).) Battery carries a fine of up to \$2,000 whereas simple assault carries a fine of up to \$1,000. (*Ibid.*)

If an individual commits simple assault or battery against members of certain professions engaged in public safety activities or performing certain public functions, the punishment may result in elevated penalties. Most relevant here are Penal Code sections 241 and 243 which make simple assault or battery of a peace officer, firefighter, emergency medical technician, lifeguard, process server, traffic officer, code enforcement officer, animal control officer, or a search and rescue member, or a custodial officer, security officer, custody assistant, or specified probation employees (only for a battery) engaged in the performance of their duties, or specified medical personnel providing services in an emergency department, where the perpetrator knows or reasonably should know of the victim’s above status, punishable by an *additional* six months in jail, for a maximum sentence of up to one year in county jail, or a fine of up to \$2,000, or by both. (Pen. Code, § 241, subd. (c), § 243, subd. (c).)

This bill adds utility workers to the list of professions against whom an assault or battery carries an elevated misdemeanor penalty. The 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 as defined, or a public water system, as defined, that performs services for or delivers a commodity to the public or any portion thereof and the service performed by the person is the construction, alteration, demolition, installation, maintenance, or repair of water, electrical, or gas infrastructure. This is a substantial addition to the special assault and battery statutes that apply to certain professions. This definition encompasses a variety of investor-owned and publicly owned electrical, gas, and water corporations, among other utility entities, and includes both people employed by, and contracted to, those entities. The scope of the definition is somewhat constrained by its application to persons performing specific services of constructing, altering, demolishing, installing, maintaining, or repairing water, electrical, or gas infrastructure. Consistent with the treatment of individuals from other professions under the special assault and battery statutes, these higher assault and battery misdemeanor penalties apply only if the utility worker is engaged in the performance of their duties and the perpetrator knows or reasonably should know that the victim is a utility worker performing their duties.

Effectively, this would increase the maximum punishment for assaulting this class of utility workers from a maximum six-month jail sentence or a \$1,000 fine to a maximum one-year jail sentence or a \$2,000 fine. Because battery is already punishable with up to a \$2,000 fine, this bill would not change the maximum fine that may be imposed for committing battery

against a utility worker. (Pen. Code, §§ 242 & 243, subd. (a).) Instead, it only increases the maximum jail term for such a battery from six months to one year.

- 5) **Felony Penalties Available for Assaults and Battery Involving Injury:** In addition to the assault and battery statutes described above, an assault or battery that causes, or is likely to cause injury (in the case of assault), can result in a prison sentence irrespective of whether the victim is employed in any of the above professions. An assault by means of force likely to produce great bodily injury, or a battery that results in serious bodily injury to another, are alternate-felony misdemeanors punishable by up to one year in county jail, or by imprisonment for two, three, or four years. (Pen. Code, §§ 245, subd. (a)(4), 243, subd. (d).) Moreover, a person who personally inflicts great bodily injury on a person other than an accomplice in the commission, or attempted commission, of a felony is subject to a three-year, additional and consecutive, sentence enhancement. (Pen. Code, § 12022.7, subd. (a).) Many of the incidents cited by proponents involve actual physical violence that causes injury (e.g., stabbing of a PG&E worker in 2022);<sup>7</sup> conduct that can already be prosecuted as a felony under existing law.
- 6) **Governor Vetoes of Particularization of Crimes:** Bills that establish profession-specific elevated assault and battery penalties are vulnerable to criticism 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. This has resulted in multiple vetoes of this type of legislation that creates profession-specific, heightened criminal penalties.

In 2015, AB 172 (Rodriguez), of the 2015-2016 Legislative Session, would have increased the penalties for assault and battery committed against a physician, nurse, or other health care worker engaged in performing services within the emergency department. Governor Brown vetoed this bill, stating:

Emergency rooms are overcrowded and often chaotic. I have great respect for the work done by emergency room staff and I recognize the daunting challenges they face every day. If there were evidence that an additional six months in county jail (three months, once good-time credits are applied) would enhance the safety of these workers or serve as a deterrent, I would sign this bill. I doubt that it would do either.

In 2017, AB 513 (Bradford), of the 2017-2018 Legislative Session, was substantially similar to this bill, although limited to increasing the criminal fines for an assault or battery of a utility worker. Governor Brown vetoed this bill, stating:

This bill adds \$1,000 to the current penalty for assault or battery if committed against a public utility worker.

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<sup>7</sup> Daily Journal, *Utility worker stabbed, suspect arrested for attempted murder in South San Francisco* (June 14, 2022) [https://www.smdailyjournal.com/news/local/utility-worker-stabbed-suspect-arrested-for-attempted-murder-in-south-san-francisco/article\\_6dd1b602-eb97-11ec-8c34-6fcfb6d4b323.html](https://www.smdailyjournal.com/news/local/utility-worker-stabbed-suspect-arrested-for-attempted-murder-in-south-san-francisco/article_6dd1b602-eb97-11ec-8c34-6fcfb6d4b323.html) [As of June 3, 2026].

I don't believe the additional \$1,000 called for in this bill would do much to deter this type of conduct, which is already punishable by either six months or a year in jail, and up to a \$2,000 fine depending on the charge.

I would note that the bill further slices and dices our criminal law, dividing the crimes of assault and battery into even more discreet categories, which grow more numerous by the decade. As a general rule I don't think this a good idea.

Our criminal code already has more than 5,000 separate criminal provisions, making it more particularized than it needs to be for an understandable and fair system of justice.

Most recently, Governor Newsom vetoed SB 596 (Portantino), of the 2023-2024 Legislative Session, which would have created a new crime with increased penalties for abusive conduct targeting school officials. In his veto message, the Governor said:

Credible threats of violence and acts of harassment - whether directed against school officials, elected officials, or members of the general public - can already be prosecuted as crimes. As such, creating a new crime is unnecessary....

No school official should be subject to threats or harassment for doing their job, period. I encourage school officials to work closely with local law enforcement to use the laws already on the books to ensure the safety and security of our community's educators and governing board members, both while carrying out their school duties on school premises and while away from school sites.

The same rationale against particularization applies to this bill.

- 7) **Argument in Support:** According to the *International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local Union 1245*, a co-sponsor of this bill, “Despite the essential nature of their work, utility workers increasingly face threats, verbal harassment, and physical violence while performing their duties in the field. Just this past March, a crew of IBEW members assigned to perform routine work in El Dorado County was threatened and then assaulted by a resident. The assailant fired multiple shots at the crew, one of which struck a line worker in the arm. By sheer luck, no other IBEW members were hurt. The same assailant then fired upon Sheriff’s Deputies when they responded, injuring the Deputies as well...”

“By clarifying that assault or battery against a utility worker engaged in their duties is subject to enhanced penalties, SB 1330 sends a strong and necessary message: violence against workers who maintain California’s critical infrastructure will not be tolerated. The bill will help deter harmful conduct, promotes worker safety, and ensures that those who keep essential services running can do their jobs without fear of attack.

“Importantly, SB 1330 applies to a range of utility workers, including those involved in the construction, installation, maintenance, and repair of water, electrical, and gas infrastructure, whether employed directly by utilities or working as contractors. This comprehensive definition reflects the modern utility workforce and ensures that all individuals performing this essential work are afforded equal protection. This comprehensive definition reflects the modern utility workforce and ensures that all individuals performing this essential work are

afforded equal protection.”

- 8) **Argument in Opposition:** According to *Courage California*, “Existing laws already provide penalties for assault and battery against all individuals, regardless of their profession. Carving out additional categories of protected workers creates a tiered system of justice that undermines the principle of equal protection under the law. Public utility employees, like all individuals, deserve safety and security in their workplace, but enhancing penalties for crimes against one group over another leads to inequitable outcomes in our criminal justice system...”

“California's history with tough-on-crime policies demonstrates that escalating penalties do not improve public safety. Instead, they contribute to costly mass incarceration without preventing harmful behavior. SB 1330 follows this flawed path. Increasing jail time for individuals who cause harm to public utility workers will not prevent such incidents and may worsen community relations with utility providers.

“When Governor Brown vetoed a similar bill, AB 172 (Rodriguez, 2015), he stated: "If there were evidence that an additional six months in county jail (three months, once good-time credits are applied) would enhance the safety of these workers or serve as a deterrent, I would sign this bill. I doubt that it would do either. We need to find more creative ways to protect the safety of these critical workers. This bill isn't the answer." This reasoning holds equally true today, SB 1330 is not the answer.”

- 9) **Related Legislation:** SB 431 (Arreguín) was substantially similar to this bill. SB 431 was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

10) **Prior Legislation:**

- a) AB 394 (Wilson), Chapter 147, Statutes of 2025, expanded the elevated penalties that apply to persons who commit battery against certain transit workers to include public transportation provider employees and contractors.
- b) AB 977 (Rodriguez), Chapter 937, Statutes of 2024, expanded the elevated criminal penalties that apply to persons who commit assault or battery against specified members of certain professions to include physicians, nurses, or other healthcare workers of a hospital engaged in providing services within the emergency department.
- c) AB 2824 (McCarty), of the 2023-2024 Legislative Session, would have expanded the elevated criminal penalties associated with committing battery against operators, drivers, or passengers of specified public transportation vehicles to include employees and contractors of a public transportation provider. AB 2824 was not heard in the Assembly Public Safety Committee.
- d) AB 329 (Rodriguez), of the 2019-2020 Legislative Session, would have created a new crime for assault on hospital property punishable by up to one year in the county jail, a fine of up to \$2,000, or by both imprisonment and the fine. AB 329 was gutted and amended in the Senate to an unrelated subject matter.

- e) SB 1416 (Bradford), of the 2019-2020 Legislative Session, was substantially similar to SB 513. SB 1416 was not heard in the Senate Public Safety Committee.
- f) SB 513 (Bradford), of the 2017-2018 Legislative Session, was similar to this bill and would have increased the penalties for assault and battery committed against public utility workers, as specified. AB 513 was vetoed by the Governor.
- g) AB 172 (Rodriguez), of the 2015-2016 Legislative Session, would have increased the penalties for assault and battery committed against a physician, nurse, or other health care worker engaged in performing services within the emergency department. AB 172 was vetoed by the Governor.
- h) SB 390 (La Malfa), Chapter 249, Statutes of 2011, increased the penalties for assault and battery against a search and rescue member.
- i) SB 406 (Lieu), Chapter 250, Statutes of 2011, increased the penalties for assault and battery against a security officer or custodial assistant.
- j) SB 409 (Lowenthal), Chapter 410, Statutes of 2009, increased the penalties for assault and battery against a highway worker.
- k) AB 1686 (Leno), Chapter 243, Statutes of 2007, increased the fine from \$1,000 to \$2,000 when an assault is committed against a parking control officer.

## **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

### **Support**

California State Association of Electrical Workers (Co-Sponsor)  
Coalition of California Utility Employees (Co-Sponsor)  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Council 57  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Afl-cio  
Arcadia Police Officers' Association  
Bay Area Council  
Brea Police Association  
Burbank Police Officers' Association  
California American Water  
California Civil Liberties Advocacy  
California Federation of Labor Unions, Afl-cio  
California Labor Federation, Afl-cio  
California Municipal Utilities Association  
California Police Chiefs Association  
California Reserve Peace Officers Association  
California Water Association  
California Water Service  
City of Long Beach, Long Beach Public Utilities Department  
City of Pico Rivera  
City of Roseville

City of Sacramento Department of Utilities  
Claremont Police Officers Association  
Corona Police Officers Association  
Culver City Police Officers' Association  
East Bay Municipal Utility District  
El Dorado Irrigation District  
Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District  
Engineers and Scientists of California, Ifpte Local 20, Afl-cio  
Fullerton Police Officers' Association  
Golden State Water Company  
Great Oaks Water Company  
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 1245  
Liberty Utilities  
Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office  
Murrieta Police Officers' Association  
Newport Beach Police Association  
Pacific Gas and Electric Company  
Palos Verdes Police Officers Association  
Placer County Deputy Sheriffs' Association  
Pomona Police Officers' Association  
Riverside Police Officers Association  
Riverside Sheriffs' Association  
Roseville; City of  
Sacramento Municipal Utility District  
San Diego Gas and Electric Company  
San Gabriel Valley Water Company  
San Jose Water Company  
Southern California Edison  
Southern California Gas Company  
Suburban Water Systems

### **Opposition**

ACLU California Action  
Courage California  
Initiate Justice  
Justice2jobs Coalition  
LA Defensa  
Local 148 Los Angeles County Public Defender's Union  
Rubicon Programs  
San Francisco Public Defender  
The W. Haywood Burns Institute

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