

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

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

Policy Committee: Public Safety

Vote: 9 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill adds utility workers to the list of professions against whom an assault or battery carries elevated misdemeanor penalties.

More specifically, this bill:

- 1) Makes an assault or battery committed against a utility worker engaged in the performance of their duties, where the perpetrator knows or reasonably should know the victim is a utility worker engaged in the performance of their duties, punishable by up to one year in county jail, a fine of up to \$2,000, or both.
- 2) Defines “utility worker” to mean a person employed by, or contracted to, an investor-owned or publicly owned water corporation, electrical corporation, gas corporation, electric cooperative, local publicly owned electric utility, or public water system, as defined, where the service performed by the person is the construction, alteration, demolition, installation, maintenance, or repair of water, electrical, or gas infrastructure.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Potential court cost pressures of an unknown, but potentially significant amount (Trial Court Trust Fund (TCTF), General Fund (GF)). By elevating the maximum punishment for assault and battery of a utility worker from six months to one year in county jail, this bill could result in lengthier and more complex criminal proceedings. Actual costs will depend on the number of persons charged and the circumstances of each case. Although courts are not funded on a workload basis, increased workload creates pressure on the GF to backfill the TCTF. The 2025-26 budget included \$117.3 million GF to backfill the TCTF for trial court operations.
- 2) Potential non-reimbursable local incarceration costs of an unknown amount (local funds). By extending the maximum jail term for these offenses from six months to one year, this bill could increase county jail commitments and lengths of stay. The average annual cost to incarcerate a person in county jail is approximately \$29,000. Actual costs will depend on the number of convictions and sentences imposed. County incarceration costs are not subject to reimbursement by the state. However, 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 public safety realignment.

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

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. SB 1330 seeks to provide our utility workers these same protections, ensuring that they can perform their work and service the public without fear.

- 2) **Background.** Existing law makes simple assault punishable by up to six months in county jail and a fine of up to \$1,000, and simple battery punishable by up to six months in county jail and a fine of up to \$2,000. When an assault or battery is committed against members of specified professions — including peace officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, highway workers, and emergency department medical personnel — engaged in the performance of their duties, existing law elevates the maximum punishment to one year in county jail and a fine of up to \$2,000. This bill extends the same elevated misdemeanor penalties to utility workers, as defined. Proponents cite a series of incidents in which utility workers were threatened or attacked in the field, including a 2022 stabbing of a PG&E worker marking gas lines and a March 2026 shooting in El Dorado County in which a line worker was struck in the arm. Conduct causing or likely to cause serious injury can already be prosecuted as an alternate felony-misdemeanor punishable by up to four years, with a three-year enhancement for personal infliction of great bodily injury. Governors Brown and Newsom have vetoed similar profession-specific penalty bills — including SB 513 (Bradford), of the 2016-17 Legislative Session, which would have increased fines for assault or battery of a utility worker — citing doubts about deterrent value and concerns about further particularizing the Penal Code.
- 3) **Related Legislation.** SB 431 (Arreguin), of this legislative session, was substantially similar to this bill. SB 431 was held on this committee’s suspense file.
- 4) **Prior Legislation.** AB 394 (Wilson), Chapter 147, Statutes of 2025, expanded elevated battery penalties to public transportation provider employees and contractors.

AB 977 (Rodriguez), Chapter 937, Statutes of 2024, expanded elevated assault and battery penalties to emergency department physicians, nurses, and other health care workers.

Analysis Prepared by: Shiran Zohar / APPR. / (916) 319-2081