

Date of Hearing: August 20, 2025

**ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS**

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 50 (Ashby) – As Amended July 9, 2025

Policy Committee:	Privacy and Consumer Protection	Vote:	15 - 0
	Judiciary		12 - 0

Urgency: No                      State Mandated Local Program: Yes                      Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill requires an account manager, upon request of a survivor of certain alleged crimes, to disconnect another person's access to the survivor's internet-connected device.

Specifically, among other provisions, this bill:

- 1) Defines "survivor" as a person against whom a covered act was committed or allegedly committed. The acts covered by the bill include the crimes of domestic violence, stalking, human trafficking, and sexual assault, among others, and conduct that constitutes the specified crimes. The bill states a criminal conviction is not required for an act to be covered.
- 2) Defines "perpetrator" as a person who has committed or allegedly committed a covered criminal act against a survivor.
- 3) Defines "account manager" as a person or entity that provides an individual an internet-based or app-based user account, or a third party that manages those user accounts on behalf of that person or entity, that has authority to make decisions regarding user access to those user accounts.
- 4) Authorizes a survivor to submit a device protection request to an account manager seeking to terminate a perpetrator's access to a connected device or associated account.
- 5) Requires the device protection request to include specified documentation that verifies the covered act, the survivor's legal control of the device, and the identity of the perpetrator and affected device.
- 6) Requires an account manager to respond to a complete device protection request within two business days. The account manager must terminate the perpetrator's access and notify the survivor or, if termination is not possible, provide a means for the survivor to reset the device to factory settings without needing a PIN or password, as specified.
- 7) Prohibits an account manager from notifying a perpetrator or disclosing any account or device information after the perpetrator's access has been terminated.
- 8) Requires an account manager to treat materials submitted by a survivor as confidential and to delete the materials within 90 days, with specified exceptions.

- 9) Authorizes a specified public prosecutor or a survivor who is injured by a violation to file a civil action to enforce a violation by an account manager, with specified remedies and civil penalties.
- 10) Exempts compliance by entities already subject to the federal Safe Connections Act of 2022 or to specified provisions of the Vehicle Code relating to telematics systems.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

- 1) Possible costs (General Fund, special funds) to the Department of Justice (DOJ) of an unknown amount. Actual costs will depend on whether the Attorney General pursues enforcement actions, and, if so, the level of additional staffing DOJ needs to handle the related workload. If DOJ hires staff to handle enforcement actions authorized by this bill, it would incur significant costs, likely in the low hundreds of thousands of dollars annually at a minimum. Additionally, DOJ anticipates costs of \$88,000 in fiscal year (FY) 2025-26 and \$167,000 in FY 2026-27 and ongoing for one new permanent analyst in its Victim Services Unit. DOJ reports the analyst will provide subject matter expertise, help survivors navigate the request process established in the bill, and act as a liaison for survivors and their families, local level victim services agencies, law enforcement agencies.
- 2) Cost pressures (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund) of an unknown but potentially significant amount to the courts to adjudicate civil enforcement cases. Actual costs will depend on the number of cases filed and the amount of court time needed to resolve each case. It generally costs approximately \$1,000 to operate a courtroom for one hour. Although courts are not funded on the basis of workload, increased pressure on the Trial Court Trust Fund may create a demand for increased funding for courts from the General Fund. The fiscal year 2025-26 state budget provides \$82 million ongoing General Fund to the Trial Court Trust Fund for court operations.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) **Background.** Today, many devices and appliances can connect to the internet and can be controlled remotely through phone-based apps. For example, thermostats, baby monitors, home security systems, smart speakers, video doorbells, refrigerators, and many more devices are commonly equipped to connect to the internet. Although this increased connectivity and remote access is beneficial for many consumers, it can also be used by perpetrators of domestic violence to torment survivors of domestic abuse. Remote access may allow a perpetrator to control devices and appliances inside a survivor's home, or glean information about the survivor's location or activities. This bill requires a covered account manager to, if possible, terminate a perpetrator's access to an internet-connected device upon request of a survivor. Failure to meet the bill's requirements is subject to civil enforcement actions filed by a public prosecutor or a survivor who is injured by the violation.

According to the analysis of this bill by the Assembly Committee on Privacy and Consumer Protection:

This bill is substantially similar to the federal Safe Connections Act (SCA) of 2022 (PL 117-223). The SCA requires mobile service providers to separate the line of a survivor of domestic violence (and other related crimes and abuse), and any individuals in the care of the

survivor, from a mobile service contract shared with an abuser within two business days after receiving a request from the survivor.

Unlike the SCA, this bill applies to broadly to all internet-connected devices, not just mobile phone services.

- 2) **Prior Legislation.** SB 1000 (Ashby), of the 2023-24 Legislative Session, was similar to this bill and also would have required a vehicle manufacturer to include, in each vehicle sold in California, a mechanism that any driver can use to disable remote vehicle technology from inside the car. SB 1000 was held on this committee's suspense file.

SB 1394 (Min), Chapter 655, Statutes of 2024, requires a vehicle manufacturer to allow drivers to terminate remote access to a vehicle and remote access to the location of a vehicle under specified circumstances.

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