

Assembly Bill No. 2006

CHAPTER 691

An act to amend Section 527.6 of the Code of Civil Procedure, relating to restraining orders.

[Approved by Governor September 21, 1996. Filed
with Secretary of State September 23, 1996.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2006, K. Murray. Harassment: restraining orders.

Existing law specifies the manner in which a person who has suffered harassment may seek a temporary restraining order and an injunction prohibiting harassment.

This bill would provide that such an order shall, on request of the petitioner, be served on the respondent, whether or not the respondent has been taken into custody, by any law enforcement officer who is present at the scene of reported harassment involving the parties to the proceedings.

This bill would also require law enforcement officers at the scene of an incident of harassment to verify the existence of the order if the protected person cannot produce a copy of it. If an officer determines that a protective order has been issued, but not served, the bill would require the officer to notify the respondent of the terms of the order and to enforce the order.

By imposing additional duties on law enforcement officers, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement, including the creation of a State Mandates Claims Fund to pay the costs of mandates that do not exceed \$1,000,000 statewide and other procedures for claims whose statewide costs exceed \$1,000,000.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 527.6 of the Code of Civil Procedure is amended to read:

527.6. (a) A person who has suffered harassment as defined in subdivision (b) may seek a temporary restraining order and an injunction prohibiting harassment as provided in this section.

(b) For the purposes of this section, “harassment” is a knowing and willful course of conduct directed at a specific person which seriously alarms, annoys, or harasses the person, and which serves no legitimate purpose. The course of conduct must be such as would cause a reasonable person to suffer substantial emotional distress, and must actually cause substantial emotional distress to the plaintiff. “Course of conduct” is a pattern of conduct composed of a series of acts over a period of time, however short, evidencing a continuity of purpose. Constitutionally protected activity is not included within the meaning of “course of conduct.”

(c) Upon filing a petition for an injunction under this section, the plaintiff may obtain a temporary restraining order in accordance with Section 527, except to the extent this section provides a rule that is inconsistent. A temporary restraining order may be issued with or without notice upon an affidavit which, to the satisfaction of the court, shows reasonable proof of harassment of the plaintiff by the defendant, and that great or irreparable harm would result to the plaintiff. A temporary restraining order issued under this section shall remain in effect, at the court’s discretion, for a period not to exceed 15 days, or, if the court extends the time for hearing under subdivision (d), not to exceed 22 days, unless otherwise modified or terminated by the court.

(d) Within 15 days, or, if good cause appears to the court, 22 days, from the date the temporary restraining order is issued, a hearing shall be held on the petition for the injunction. The defendant may file a response which explains, excuses, justifies, or denies the alleged harassment or may file a cross-complaint under this section. At the hearing, the judge shall receive any testimony that is relevant, and may make an independent inquiry. If the judge finds by clear and convincing evidence that unlawful harassment exists, an injunction shall issue prohibiting the harassment. An injunction issued pursuant to this section shall have a duration of not more than three years. At any time within the three months before the expiration of the injunction, the plaintiff may apply for a renewal of the injunction by filing a new petition for an injunction under this section.

(e) Nothing in this section shall preclude either party from representation by private counsel or from appearing on the party’s own behalf.

(f) In a proceeding under this section where there are allegations or threats of domestic violence, a support person may accompany a party in court and, where the party is not represented by an attorney, may sit with the party at the table that is generally reserved for the party and the party’s attorney. The support person is present to provide moral and emotional support for a person who alleges he or



she is a victim of domestic violence. The support person is not present as a legal adviser and shall not give legal advice. The support person shall assist the person who alleges he or she is a victim of domestic violence in feeling more confident that he or she will not be injured or threatened by the other party during the proceedings where the person who alleges he or she is a victim of domestic violence and the other party must be present in close proximity. Nothing in this subdivision precludes the court from exercising its discretion to remove the support person from the courtroom if the court believes the support person is prompting, swaying, or influencing the party assisted by the support person.

(g) Upon filing of a petition for an injunction under this section, the defendant shall be personally served with a copy of the petition, temporary restraining order, if any, and notice of hearing of the petition. Service shall be made within five days from the date the temporary restraining order is issued or two days before the hearing, whichever is earlier. The court may for good cause, on motion of the applicant or on its own motion, shorten the time for service on the opposing party.

(h) The court shall order the plaintiff or the attorney for the plaintiff to deliver a copy of each temporary restraining order or injunction, or modification or termination thereof, granted under this section, by the close of the business day on which the order was granted, to the law enforcement agencies within the court's discretion as are requested by the plaintiff. Each appropriate law enforcement agency shall make available information as to the existence and current status of these orders to law enforcement officers responding to the scene of reported harassment.

An order issued under this section shall, on request of the petitioner, be served on the respondent, whether or not the respondent has been taken into custody, by any law enforcement officer who is present at the scene of reported harassment involving the parties to the proceeding. The petitioner shall provide the officer with an endorsed copy of the order and a proof of service which the officer shall complete and send to the issuing court.

Upon receiving information at the scene of an incident of harassment that a protective order has been issued under this section, or that a person who has been taken into custody is the respondent to such an order, if the protected person cannot produce a certified copy of the order, a law enforcement officer shall immediately attempt to verify the existence of the order.

If the law enforcement officer determines that a protective order has been issued, but not served, the officer shall immediately notify the respondent of the terms of the order and shall at that time also enforce the order. Verbal notice of the terms of the order shall constitute service of the order and is sufficient notice for the purposes



of this section and for the purposes of Section 273.6 and subdivision (g) of Section 12021 of the Penal Code.

(i) The prevailing party in any action brought under this section may be awarded court costs and attorney's fees, if any.

(j) Any willful disobedience of any temporary restraining order or injunction granted under this section is punishable pursuant to Section 273.6 of the Penal Code.

(k) This section does not apply to any action or proceeding covered by Title 1.6C (commencing with Section 1788) of the Civil Code or by Division 10 (commencing with Section 6200) of the Family Code. Nothing in this section shall preclude a plaintiff's right to use other existing civil remedies.

(l) The Judicial Council shall promulgate forms and instructions therefor, rules for service of process, scheduling of hearings, and any other matters required by this section. The petition and response forms shall be simple and concise.

SEC. 2. Notwithstanding Section 17610 of the Government Code, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code. If the statewide cost of the claim for reimbursement does not exceed one million dollars (\$1,000,000), reimbursement shall be made from the State Mandates Claims Fund.

Notwithstanding Section 17580 of the Government Code, unless otherwise specified, the provisions of this act shall become operative on the same date that the act takes effect pursuant to the California Constitution.

