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**SENATE BILL 6522**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2020 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Wellman, Darneille, Nguyen, Hunt, Das, Hasegawa, Kuderer, Pedersen, and Wilson, C.

AN ACT Relating to the courts open to all act; adding new sections to chapter 2.28 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 3.02 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 35.20 RCW; and creating new sections.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature finds that civil arrests in and around Washington's court facilities impede the fundamental mission of Washington's courts, which is to ensure due process and access to justice for everyone. The United States supreme court has recognized that "the unhindered and untrammeled functioning of our courts is part of the very foundation of our constitutional democracy," and that a state may therefore adopt measures necessary and appropriate to safeguarding the administration of justice by its courts. *Cox v. Louisiana*, 379 U.S. 559, 562 (1965). People access courts for many reasons, including to obtain domestic violence and sexual assault protection orders, obtain child support orders, seek back wages, pay traffic fines, apply for permits, answer and defend against criminal charges, answer and defend against eviction actions, testify in civil and criminal proceedings, and get married. The administration of justice depends upon all people having free and full access to the courts.

(2) The legislature further finds that civil arrests at Washington court facilities have created a climate of fear that is deterring and preventing Washington residents from safely interacting with the justice system. Victims cannot seek protection, families cannot enter into custody agreements, and those charged with crimes cannot mount a proper defense or be held accountable. Courts and lawyers cannot deliver the promise of equal access to justice and due process under law to community members who are precluded from accessing the courts. Therefore, it is essential that the state have policies providing safeguards protecting access to justice.

(3) The legislature further finds that it is imperative that we ensure that all members of our community feel safe coming to, remaining at, and returning from Washington's courts. The United States supreme court has acknowledged that a state has "the power to preserve the property under its control for the use to which it is lawfully dedicated," and that "[t]here is little doubt that in some circumstances the Government may ban the entry on to public property that is not a 'public forum' of all persons except those who have legitimate business on the premises." *United States v. Grace*, 461 U.S. 171, 178 (1983). Accordingly, Washington may regulate entry and access to the courts, and activity on courthouse premises and environs, that threatens the fair and nondiscriminatory administration of justice or the openness of courts. Additionally, the United States supreme court and the Washington supreme court have long recognized privileges against civil arrests for those attending court. In recognition of the harmful impacts of civil arrests in and around Washington courts, the legislature has a substantial and compelling interest in ensuring the courts in the state of Washington remain places where the rights and dignity of all residents are maintained and there is access to justice for all.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 2.28 RCW to read as follows:

The definitions in this section apply throughout this section and sections 3 through 5 of this act unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Civil arrest" means the arrest of a person for an alleged violation of civil law. It is not an arrest for an alleged violation of criminal law, or for contempt of the court in which the court proceeding is taking place or will be taking place.

(2) "Court facility" means any building or space occupied or used by a court of this state, and adjacent property, including but not limited to adjacent sidewalks, all parking areas, grassy areas, plazas, court-related offices, commercial and governmental spaces within court building property, and entrances and exits from said building or space.

(3) "Court order" means a directive issued by a judge or magistrate under the authority of Article III of the United States Constitution or Article IV of the state Constitution. A "court order" includes but is not limited to warrants and subpoenas.

(4) "Court security personnel" means law enforcement agencies and officers assigned to protect court facilities or to transport in-custody individuals to and from court proceedings and private agents contracted to provide security at court facilities.

(5) "Court staff" means any municipal, county, or state employees or contractors assigned to perform duties in court facilities, including but not limited to probation officers, court security personnel, court clerks, court administrators, interpreters, court facilitators, and bailiffs.

(6) "Federal immigration authority" means any officer, employee, or person otherwise paid by or acting as an agent of the United States department of homeland security including but not limited to its subagencies, immigration and customs enforcement, and customs and border protection, and any present or future divisions thereof, charged with immigration enforcement.

(7) "Immigration or citizenship status" means as such status has been established to such individual under the immigration and nationality act.

(8) "Judge" includes justices of the supreme court, judges of the court of appeals, judges of the superior courts, judges of any court organized under Title 3 or 35 RCW, judges pro tempore, court commissioners, and magistrates.

(9) "Law enforcement action" includes but is not limited to observation of court proceedings, investigation, questioning, and arrests by law enforcement agents acting in their official capacity.

(10) "Nonpublicly available personal information" includes one or more of the following, when the information is linked with or is reasonably linkable, including via analytic technology, to the person's first name or first initial and last name: Location, home address, work address, immigration or citizenship status or place of birth, telephone number, social security number, driver's license number or Washington identification card number, electronic mail address, social media handle or other identifying social media information, and any other means of contacting the person.

(11) "Prosecutor" means a county prosecuting attorney, a city attorney, or the attorney general.

(12) "State law enforcement agency" means any agency of the state of Washington that:

(a) Is a general authority Washington law enforcement agency as defined in RCW 10.93.020;

(b) Is authorized to operate prisons or to maintain custody of individuals in prisons; or

(c) Is authorized to operate juvenile detention facilities or to maintain custody of individuals in juvenile detention facilities.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 2.28 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Judges, court staff, court security personnel, prosecutors, and personnel of the prosecutor's office:

(a) Shall not inquire into or collect information about an individual's immigration or citizenship status, or place of birth, unless there is a connection between such information and an investigation into a violation of state or local criminal law; provided that a judge may make such inquiries as are necessary to adjudicate matters within their jurisdiction. The court may enter orders or conditions to maintain limited disclosure of any information regarding immigration status as it deems appropriate to protect the liberty interests of victims, the accused, civil litigants, witnesses, and those who have accompanied victims to a court facility; and

(b) Shall not otherwise provide nonpublicly available personal information about an individual, including individuals subject to community custody pursuant to RCW 9.94A.701 and 9.94A.702, to federal immigration authorities for the purpose of civil immigration enforcement, nor notify federal immigration authorities of the presence of individuals attending proceedings or accessing court services in court facilities, unless required by federal law or court order.

(2) Sections 2 through 5 of this act do not limit or prohibit any state or local agency or officer from:

(a) Sending to, or receiving from, federal immigration authorities the citizenship or immigration status of a person, or maintaining such information, or exchanging the citizenship or immigration status of an individual with any other federal, state, or local government agency, in accordance with 8 U.S.C. Sec. 1373; or

(b) Complying with any other state or federal law.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 2.28 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Court security personnel or designated court staff shall collect the name of the law enforcement officer, agency, date, time, specific law enforcement purpose, and the proposed law enforcement action to be taken by all on-duty state and federal law enforcement officers, including plainclothes officers. Court security personnel or designated court staff shall file a report for each law enforcement action taken by on-duty state and federal law enforcement officers in or on a court facility. Court security personnel or designated court staff shall immediately transmit this information to an appropriate supervisor, superior court clerk, or the court administrator. Such reports are public records and must not include personally identifying information concerning the individual who was the target of the law enforcement action, and to the extent such individuals are identified, they must be identified by the initials of their first and last names.

(2) Courts shall transmit the information collected to the administrative office of the courts on a monthly basis. The administrative office of the courts shall publish this information on a dedicated web site on a quarterly basis, organized by county, law enforcement agency, and law enforcement purpose.

(3) The court security personnel or designated court staff shall inform the presiding judge or the presiding judge's designee if a law enforcement agent covered by this section is present in the court facility with the intent of arresting or otherwise taking into custody a party or other participant in a case before a judge.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 2.28 RCW to read as follows:

(1) No person is subject to civil arrest while going to, remaining at, or returning from, a court facility, except:

(a) Where such arrest is pursuant to a court order authorizing the arrest;

(b) When necessary to secure the immediate safety of judges, court staff, or the public; or

(c) Where circumstances otherwise permit warrantless arrest pursuant to RCW 10.31.100.

(2) For purposes of this section, "going to" and "returning from" includes the area within one mile of the court facility.

(3) State and federal law enforcement officers must provide court security personnel or designated court staff with a copy of a court order authorizing any civil arrest in or on a court facility prior to making the arrest. Court security personnel or designated court staff shall immediately transmit this information to the presiding judicial officer or a designated judicial officer to review the court order and confirm compliance with this requirement prior to any such arrest.

(4) Nothing in this section narrows, or in any way lessens, any common law or other right or privilege of a person privileged from arrest pursuant to sections 2 through 4 of this act or otherwise.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 2.28 RCW to read as follows:

Sections 2 through 5 of this act apply to the following courts: The supreme court, the courts of appeal, the superior courts, and to the courts of limited jurisdiction of this state, including district and municipal courts.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 3.02 RCW to read as follows:

The provisions of sections 2 through 5 of this act apply to courts of limited jurisdiction.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 35.20 RCW to read as follows:

The provisions of sections 2 through 5 of this act apply to municipal courts.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act may be known and cited as the courts open to all act.

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