

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6086

As of January 22, 2026

Title: An act relating to strengthening security for Washington state judicial officers and court personnel.

Brief Description: Strengthening security for Washington state judicial officers and court personnel.

Sponsors: Senators Dhingra, Conway, Cortes, Lias, Nobles, Orwall, Pedersen, Riccelli, Salomon and Wilson, C.; by request of Administrative Office of the Courts.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 1/22/26.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes the requirement that a threat be imminent and serious for the unlawful release of personal information of criminal justice officials.
- Expands the list of individuals who are eligible to request that personal information be removed from the internet, and to bring a court action for actual damages.
- Requires removal of personal information from the internet within ten business days after receipt of the request from an eligible individual.
- Expands the list of criminal justice participants eligible for the address confidentiality program.
- Authorizes security consultants of the Administrative Office of the Courts to conduct threat assessments on behalf of judicial officers.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Staff: Tim Ford (786-7414)

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background: Unlawful Release of Personal Information of Criminal Justice Officials. No person may knowingly make available on the Internet the personal information of a peace officer, corrections person, justice, judge, commissioner, public defender, or prosecutor if the dissemination poses an imminent and serious threat to the public officers or their immediate families. It must be reasonably apparent to the person making the information available that the threat is serious and imminent. It is not a violation if a person working in the county auditor's or county assessor's office publishes this information in good faith and in the ordinary course of business.

Personal information includes:

- home addresses;
- home telephone numbers;
- pager numbers;
- social security numbers;
- home email addresses;
- directions to the person's home; and
- photographs of the person's home or vehicle.

Any person who suffers damages as a result of the restricted Internet publications may bring a civil action for actual damages, reasonable attorney's fees and costs, and additional damages of up to \$1,000 for each day the personal information was available on the Internet.

Criminal Justice Participants Eligible for the Address Confidentiality Program. Any criminal justice participant or election official who is a target for threats of harassment or cyber-harassment shall be eligible for the address confidentiality program. A criminal justice participant includes:

- federal, state, or municipal court judge or court staff;
- federal, state, or local law enforcement agency employee;
- federal, state, or local prosecuting attorney or deputy prosecuting attorney;
- staff member of any adult corrections institution or local adult detention facility;
- staff member of any juvenile corrections institution or local juvenile detention facility;
- community corrections officer, probation, or parole officer;
- member of the indeterminate sentence review board;
- advocate from a crime victim/witness program;
- defense attorney; or
- state or local clerk staff.

Bailiffs of the supreme court are authorized to conduct threat assessments on behalf of supreme court justices. The supreme court shall ensure that supreme court bailiffs are qualified by training and experience. Bailiffs of the supreme court are authorized to receive criminal history record information that includes non-conviction data for purposes exclusively related to the investigation of any person making a threat against a supreme

court justice. Dissemination or use of criminal history records or non-conviction data for purposes other than authorized is prohibited. Founded threats must be referred to local law enforcement for further action. Local law enforcement is authorized to report the outcome and any anticipated action to bailiffs of the supreme court.

Summary of Bill: A person shall not knowingly make available on the internet the personal information of an eligible individual if the dissemination of the personal information poses a threat to the eligible individual's safety or safety of the eligible individual's immediate family. It is not a violation if an employee of the county auditor or assessor publishes personal information, in good faith, on the county website in the ordinary course of carrying out public functions provided the employee complies with requests to remove personal information.

Any agency, business, person, data broker, or website who receives a request from an eligible individual to remove personal information from the internet must comply within ten business days of receiving the request.

The list of criminal justice officials protected from the unlawful dissemination of personal information is expanded and renamed an eligible individual. The former list of officials now also includes a judicial officer, court clerk, administrative law judge for the Office of Administrative Hearings, and a criminal justice participant. A judicial officer is defined and includes a justice, judge, commissioner, or magistrate of any federal, state, or local court, and administrative law judges appointed under the Administrative Procedure Act.

For eligibility to participate in the address confidentiality program, a criminal justice participant seeking protection from a threat or harassment is expanded to include a federal, state, or local court judicial officer or court administrator or court staff, and also a state or local clerk staff.

Court security consultants of the administrative office of the courts are authorized to conduct threat assessments on behalf of judicial officers. The administrative office of the courts shall ensure that court security consultants are qualified by training and experience for these duties. Court security consultants are authorized to receive criminal history record information that includes non-conviction data for exclusive purpose of the investigation of any threat against a judicial officer. Dissemination of criminal history records for any other purpose is prohibited. Founded threats must be referred to local law enforcement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 13, 2026.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Threats against Washington State judicial staff has increased by 70 percent over the past few years. When safety is compromised the independence of our courts are at risk. As you know clerks keep court records and our names are on those documents. There are threats against clerks and we are the only participants of the justice system that are not included in the definition of a criminal justice participant.

OTHER: We support the clerks, but there are implementation hurdles such as the fine. The auditors computer system doesn't allow for the redaction of files. The new language should be removed so they don't get fined. There are 300 million records in the state archives and some of those are auditor records. We need to better understand our responsibilities.

About 20 years ago this statute was found unconstitutional because it used the term "harassment or intimidate," and using the word "threat" may be unconstitutional for the same reasons. There are also constitutional protections for posting information on the internet and it may be unconstitutional to require the information to be removed in 10 days.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Catherine Cornwall, King County Superior Court Clerk; Judge Sean O'Donnell, Superior Court Judges' Association; J. Lee Schultz, Administrative Office of the Courts, Board for Judicial Administration.

OTHER: Timothy Grisham, WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY OFFICIALS; Heather Hirota, Office of the Secretary of State; Michael Shaw, Washington State Association of County Auditors; James McMahan, WA Assoc Sheriffs & Police Chiefs; Russell Brown, WA Association of Prosecuting Attorneys.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.