



association of california
school administrators



CALIFORNIA COUNTY
SUPERINTENDENTS

August 9, 2023

The Honorable Chris Holden
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1020 N Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Senate Bill 553 (Cortese). Occupational safety: workplace violence: restraining orders and workplace violence prevention plan.
Oppose (as amended July 10, 2023)

Dear Assembly Member Holden:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write in respectful opposition to Senate Bill 553 (Cortese), related to workplace violence prevention plans. We fully support providing a safe worksite for both employees and those members of the public who are present on our county, special district, school and business improvement district facilities. Regrettably, the approach proposed in SB 553 is a poor fit for the public agencies our organizations represent. They would be better served through more tailored approaches considered through the established stakeholder process.

We are concerned with the scale and cost of obligations imposed by SB 553. Unlike the private industry, local fee authority does not allow for cost recovery. For school districts alone, the initial workplace violence prevention plan training component for just one hour would be approximately \$19 million in Proposition 98 dollars. This does not include the direct administrative costs for developing and revising the plan and associated record keeping.

We understand there is concern with the deliberative, stakeholder inclusive regulatory process underway with Cal/OSHA to develop guidance on the same topic. We appreciate the slight delay of implementation but would encourage consideration to also delay moving this bill forward to give time for more extensive conversations with the diverse types of employers, still aiming to meet a January 1, 2025 deadline. Furthermore, if implementation is not to take place until January 2025, we request that conversations continue during the legislative interim to understand the full implementation needs and possible unintended consequences of applying a healthcare worksite standard to a diverse group of public sector settings like schools, libraries, and public safety departments.

Related to the expansion of temporary restraining order (TRO) filing authority to union representatives, we are concerned this would undermine other existing administrative processes that are available currently to address employee safety concerns outside of the judicial system. It is not clear to our organizations why this additional authority is needed when employees themselves may seek a TRO and their employer(s) may assist in that process.

(continued)

Local agencies take employee safety seriously. There are existing requirements across various statutes for public employers to provide workplace protections specific to those job duties or job settings. SB 553 would not necessarily result in an immediate reduction in workplace violence and we welcome and encourage the conversation on other means to best use local resources to achieve this goal. For the aforementioned reasons, we respectfully oppose SB 553.

Sincerely,



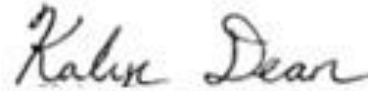
Dorothy Johnson
Legislative Advocate
Association of California School Administrators



Aaron Avery
Senior Legislative Representative
California Special District Association



Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California



Kalyn Dean
Legislative Representative
California State Association of Counties



Brianna Bruns
Director, Policy & Advocacy
California County Superintendents



Rena Leddy
Board President
California Downtown Association

cc: The Honorable David Cortese, California State Senate
Honorable Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Irene Ho, Principal Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Lauren Prichard, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus