

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
Senator Thomas Umberg, Chair
2025-2026 Regular Session

AB 2529 (Johnson)
Version: April 9, 2026
Hearing Date: June 30, 2026
Fiscal: Yes
Urgency: No
ME

SUBJECT

Civil claims: public entities and employees: declaration

DIGEST

This bill requires that a claim against a public entity or public employee include a declaration that, upon information and belief, the contents of the claim are true and correct.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Government Claims Act (Act) provides public entities with the opportunity to address claims for civil damages before the claimant files a civil lawsuit. The Act specifies information that the claimant must present to the public entity within six months of the accrual of the cause of action. The claim against a public entity must be signed by the claimant or by some person on the claimant's behalf and include specified information. The public entity then has 45 days to decide whether to grant or deny the claim, unless the claimant and public entity both agree to extend the decision timeframe. The claimant is permitted to file a lawsuit in civil court after they receive the public entity's decision. If claim presentation requirements are not met, the claimant's law suit can be dismissed.

This bill instead requires a claim against a public entity to include a declaration that, upon information and belief, the contents of the claim are true and correct.

The bill is author sponsored and supported by public entities. No timely opposition has been submitted to the Committee. Should the bill pass this Committee, it will then be referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LAW

Existing law:

- 1) Governs, under the Government Claims Act, the tort liability and immunity of, and claims and actions against, public entities, officers, and employees. (Gov. Code §§ 815 et seq.)
- 2) Prohibits an aggrieved person from filing a civil lawsuit against a public entity for damages unless the person satisfies the claim presentation requirements. Some types of claims against public entities are not subject to the claim presentation requirements. (Gov. Code § 945.4.)
- 3) Provides that a claim relating to a cause of action for death or for injury to person or to personal property or growing crops shall be presented as provided in Government Code sections 915 et seq., not later than six months after the accrual of the cause of action. (Gov. Code § 911.2.)
- 4) Requires that a claim against a public entity or public employee be signed by the claimant or by some person on the claimant's behalf and include specified information. (Gov. Code § 910, § 910.2.)

This bill requires a claim against a public entity or public employee to include a declaration that, upon information and belief, the contents of the claim are true and correct.

COMMENTS

1. Stated need for the bill

According to the author:

AB 2529 strengthens the Government Claims Act process and protects taxpayer dollars from frivolous claims by requiring all employment claims against a public entity to include a declaration that the contents of the claim are true and correct. Coming from a background in local government, I believe that this additional layer of protection is incredibly important in ensuring that all legitimate claims can move forward while those that lack merit are filtered out under this declaration.

2. The Government Claims Act

The Government Claims Act gives public entities the opportunity to address claims for civil damages before the claimant files a civil lawsuit. The Act specifies information that the claimant must present to the public entity. The claim against a public entity must be

signed by the claimant or by some person on the claimant's behalf and include specified information. The public entity then has 45 days to decide whether to grant or deny the claim, unless the claimant and public entity both agree to extend the decision timeframe. The claimant is permitted to file a lawsuit in civil court after they receive the public entity decision. If claim presentation requirements are not met, the claimant's law-suit can be dismissed. This bill requires the claim against the public entity to include a declaration that, upon information and belief, the contents of the claim are true and correct.

The author and supporters believe that the updated declaration will lead to less litigation and less costly litigation.

The California Contract Cities Association writes the following in support:

Under existing law, claims filed against a public entity or its employees must be signed by the claimant. AB 2529 would add a new layer of accountability to this process by requiring that claimants sign a formal declaration affirming that the information contained in their claim is true and correct to the best of their knowledge. This added safeguard will discourage the presentation of frivolous or otherwise bad-faith claims, and ultimately help to reduce cities' litigation costs. As written, AB 2529 is a commonsense measure that will improve claim screening, protect limited local resources, and strengthen cities' legal position.

The County of Riverside Board of Supervisors explains the following in support:

The County fully recognizes that employees who experience unlawful discrimination, harassment, retaliation, or other workplace violations deserve meaningful access to legal remedies and a fair adjudication of their claims. Nothing in AB 2529 diminishes those rights. Rather, the bill seeks to ensure that allegations made in pursuit of monetary damages are verified by the claimant at the outset of litigation, promoting greater accuracy and accountability in the legal process.

The County's Risk Management professionals have identified two recurring issues in employment litigation. First, complaints often contain broad pleadings that assert multiple overlapping causes of action with expansive factual allegations. Second, existing attorney fee provisions can incentivize plaintiffs' counsel to pursue expansive litigation strategies because recovery on even a single claim may result in significant fee awards. As a result, allegations are sometimes broadened or exaggerated beyond the facts that can ultimately be substantiated.

AB 2529 would provide a measured response to this problem by requiring claimants to attest that there is a factual basis for allegations supporting claims

for monetary damages. This requirement would encourage greater precision in pleadings, discourage knowingly false or exaggerated claims, and provide parties with a stronger basis for evaluating cases at an earlier stage. In turn, public entities may be better positioned to focus resources on resolving legitimate disputes while reducing expenditures associated with defending wholly or partially frivolous claims.

SUPPORT

California Contract Cities Association
City of Beverly Hills
County of Riverside Board of Supervisors
Public Risk Innovation, Solutions, and Management

OPPOSITION

None received

RELATED LEGISLATION

Pending Legislation: None known.

Prior Legislation: None known.

PRIOR VOTES:

Assembly Floor (Ayes 62, Noes 4)
Assembly Appropriations Committee (Ayes 13, Noes 0)
Assembly Judiciary Committee (Ayes 11, Noes 0)
