

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 24, 2025

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 16, 2025

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

SENATE BILL

NO. 627

Introduced by Senators ~~Wiener and Arreguín~~ *Wiener, Arreguín, and Pérez*
(Coauthor: Senator Caballero)
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Elhawary, Kalra, and Lee)

February 20, 2025

An act to add Section 185.5 to the Penal Code, relating to law enforcement.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 627, as amended, Wiener. Law enforcement: masks.

Existing law makes it a misdemeanor to wear a mask, false whiskers, or any personal disguise, as specified, with the purpose of evading or escaping discovery, recognition, or identification while committing a public offense, or for concealment, flight, evasion, or escape from arrest or conviction for any public offense.

This bill would make it a ~~misdemeanor~~ *crime* for a law enforcement officer to wear any mask or personal disguise while interacting with the public in the performance of their duties, except as specified. *The bill would exempt an officer engaged in an undercover assignment from these provisions.* The bill would define law enforcement officer as any officer of a local, state, or federal law enforcement agency, or any person acting on behalf of a local, state, or federal law enforcement agency. By creating a new crime, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program. ~~The bill would additionally state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to ensure that Special Weapons and Tactics team officers can utilize gear necessary to protect their faces from physical harm while they perform their duties, and to enact legislation to require local, state, and federal law enforcement officers to include their name or badge number on their uniforms.~~

This bill would declare its provisions to be severable.

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.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

Digest Key

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: yes

Bill Text

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 185.5 is added to the Penal Code, to read:

185.5. (a) A law enforcement officer shall not wear any mask or personal disguise while interacting with the public in the performance of their duties, except for medical grade masks that are surgical or N95 respirators designed to prevent the transmission of airborne ~~diseases and~~ *diseases*, masks designed to protect against exposure to smoke during a state of emergency related to ~~wildfires.~~ *wildfires, or protective gear used by Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team officers necessary to protect their faces from harm while they perform their SWAT responsibilities.*

~~(b) A violation of this section shall be punishable as a misdemeanor.~~

~~(c)(1) It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to ensure that Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team officers can utilize gear necessary to protect their faces from physical harm while they perform their SWAT responsibilities.~~

~~(2) It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to require law enforcement officers to include their name or badge number on their uniforms.~~

(b) This section does not apply to an officer while they are engaged in an undercover assignment.

(c) (1) A violation of this section by any person acting on behalf of a local, state or federal agency, that is not a sworn peace officer or agent, shall be a misdemeanor.

(2) A violation of this section by a sworn peace officer of a local, state, or federal law enforcement agency, or an agent of a state, local, or federal agency, shall be an infraction. A second or subsequent violation shall be an infraction or a misdemeanor.

(d) (1) For the purposes of this section, “law enforcement officer” means any officer of a local, state, or federal law enforcement agency, or any person acting on behalf of a local, state, or federal law enforcement agency.

(2) For the purposes of this section, “mask or personal disguise” does not include a face shield if it does not conceal the wearer’s face.

(e) The provisions of this section are severable. If any provision of this section or its application is held invalid, that invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application.

SEC. 2. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.