

As a leading safety and security consulting firm with a strong presence in California, Sorensen Wilder & Associates brings a wealth of expertise to the table. We commend the California Legislature for its comprehensive and robust approach to combating workplace violence.

After reviewing California Senate Bill 553, signed into law on September 30, 2023, and California Labor Code section 6401.9, which became effective and enforceable on July 1, 2024, we respectfully submit the following comments and recommendations for consideration.

1. Workplace Violence Prevention Plan: Employers must develop, implement, and maintain an effective workplace violence prevention plan. This includes designating responsible individuals, involving employees and representatives in plan development, coordinating with other employers when necessary, and implementing procedures for reporting violence, prohibiting retaliation, communicating with employees about violence, identifying hazards, post-incident response, and plan review.

While the development of solid workplace violence plans is imperative to staff safety, the new standard attached to the law may pose challenges for employers. Budget constraints may lead them to seek 'cookie-cutter' plans that do not meet the standard. We believe that implementing grant funding to assist employers in hiring subject matter experts would be beneficial in this regard.

2. Training and record-keeping: Employers must provide initial and annual training on the plan, keep records of hazard identification and correction, training, workplace violence incidents, and incident investigations for at least five years, and produce them to California and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) upon request.

Creating new training to meet standards is difficult if you have never had to do it before. Again, we believe that training is imperative, whether it is how to greet a customer or especially dealing with workplace violence. We respond naturally to situations more effectively if we are trained effectively. Often, conducting this training becomes costly for employers, and they try to find programs that are “blanket” programs to “just get by.” Again, we would like to see a grant program attached to the bill to assist employers in finding a reputable training program and firm that would help with training, hazard identification, investigations, and record keeping.