

AB-2505

Attorneys: Pro Bono
Legal Services



Prepared by the
ELDERLY CARE
EVERYWHERE POLICY
TEAM



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Largest youth lobbying group for senior citizens and senior care in California.

Executive Summary

Assembly Bill No. 2505 (AB 2505), introduced by Assembly Member Gabriel during the 2023-2024 Regular Session of the California Legislature, seeks to enhance the provision of pro bono legal services by attorneys in California. The bill aims to ensure that legal aid is accessible to those who cannot afford it by promoting the culture of voluntary service among licensed attorneys.

AB 2505 stipulates that every lawyer should aspire to fulfill their commitment to provide pro bono legal services annually and contribute financially to California legal aid organizations. The bill requires active licensees to report the amount of pro bono and reduced fee legal services provided each year through their My State Bar online profile.

The bill defines pro bono legal services as those provided without expectation of compensation to indigent persons or to organizations addressing the needs of persons of limited means. Reduced fee legal services are those offered at substantially lower rates to low-income individuals and eligible organizations.

To support transparency and accountability, the State Bar will retain the reported data for at least five years. However, this information will be kept confidential and exempt from public disclosure, with the State Bar authorized to publish aggregated and anonymized reports.

AB 2505 includes exceptions for certain attorneys, such as those employed by organizations primarily providing pro bono services, full-time government employees, or those prohibited by their employers from performing pro bono work. The bill also ensures that the reporting requirement will not be grounds for disciplinary action against non-compliant licensees.

Additionally, AB 2505 aims to foster a collaborative environment within the legal community, encouraging law firms and solo practitioners alike to increase their engagement in pro bono work. This legislative effort reflects a growing recognition of the essential role that legal professionals play in safeguarding access to justice, particularly for the most vulnerable members of society. It aligns with broader societal goals of equity and inclusion, serving as a vital mechanism for addressing systemic legal barriers. This bill seeks not only to assist individuals in immediate need but also to foster a broader culture of service within the profession.

In summary, AB 2505 encourages attorneys to contribute to legal aid efforts, promoting access to justice for underserved populations. By formalizing the reporting of pro bono activities, the bill seeks to strengthen the culture of voluntary legal service and ensure that more Californians receive the legal support they need.



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Our Position

Assembly Bill No. 2505 (AB 2505), introduced by Assembly Member Gabriel during the 2023-2024 Regular Session of the California Legislature, is designed to significantly expand access to legal services for those unable to afford them. This bill actively encourages attorneys to dedicate a meaningful portion of their practice to pro bono work and to also support California legal aid organizations financially. Active licensees are required to annually report their pro bono and reduced fee legal services through their My State Bar online profile, a move promoting transparency and accountability.

Pro bono legal services are clearly defined as those provided without expectation of compensation to indigent individuals or organizations serving economically disadvantaged low-income communities. Additionally, reduced fee legal services are offered at substantially lower rates to low-income clients and eligible organizations. By institutionalizing the reporting of these activities, AB 2505 aims to foster a strong culture of volunteer legal aid and significantly increase its availability across the state.

Elderly Care Everywhere strongly supports AB 2505, as it aligns perfectly with our mission to advocate for the health and well-being of seniors and marginalized populations. By encouraging attorneys to engage in pro bono work, AB 2505 raises crucial awareness about the essential role of legal aid and underscores the need for comprehensive legal services to robustly support vulnerable groups. This bill supports our unwavering commitment to justice and protecting the rights and dignity of those who cannot afford legal representation.

A key feature of AB 2505 is the confidentiality of the reported information, which safeguards individual privacy while still allowing the State Bar to publish aggregated, anonymized data. This delicate balance ensures transparency without compromising personal information, fostering an environment where attorneys can contribute to pro bono efforts without any fear of public disclosure.

Additionally, AB 2505 provides specific exemptions for certain attorneys, such as those employed by pro bono-focused organizations, full-time government employees, and those restricted by their employers from performing pro bono work. This flexibility acknowledges the diverse circumstances of legal professionals while maintaining the overall goal of significantly increasing pro bono contributions.

Elderly Care Everywhere endorses AB 2505 because it powerfully supports our vision of equitable access to justice, ensuring that more Californians, including seniors and low-income individuals, receive the legal support they desperately need. Our advocacy for AB 2505 is deeply rooted in the firm belief that everyone deserves access to legal services, fostering a community where all members are valued and supported.



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Letter of Support for AB-2505

June 4, 2024

The Honorable Thomas Umberg, Chair
Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for AB-2505

Dear Senator Umberg and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

On behalf of Elderly Care Everywhere, I am writing to assert our strong support for AB 2505, which proposes enhancing pro bono legal services provided by attorneys in California. This bill is crucial for ensuring that low-income individuals, particularly seniors, have access to essential legal services.

AB 2505 mandates that every active attorney in California report their pro bono legal services annually. This transparency will encourage more legal professionals to contribute their time and expertise to those in need. By requiring attorneys to disclose the hours of pro bono and reduced fee legal services provided, the bill aims to increase the availability of legal assistance for the underserved. This measure is about accountability and fostering a culture of public service within the legal profession, highlighting the importance of giving back to the community.

Access to legal services is often a critical need for seniors, who are among the most vulnerable members of our society. Issues such as housing security, healthcare, elder abuse, and estate planning require legal assistance that many seniors cannot afford. AB 2505 will ensure that more attorneys can provide these essential services, enhancing our senior population's quality of life and security. The bill addresses the significant gap in legal aid for elderly individuals, ensuring they are not left without recourse in times of legal need.

We strongly urge the Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary to pass AB 2505, promoting increased access to legal services for seniors and other underserved populations.

Sincerely,
Aakrisht Mehra
Founder/CEO
Elderly Care Everywhere



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About Elderly Care Everywhere

Elderly Care Everywhere is a transformative nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of senior citizens. Since its inception, the organization has positively impacted over 40,000 seniors through a variety of programs aimed at enhancing their quality of life.

Elderly Care Everywhere has been instrumental in alleviating hundreds of thousands of dollars in medical debt, ensuring that seniors have access to the healthcare they need without the burden of financial stress. With more than 20 chapters across the United States, the organization extends its reach and resources to numerous communities, providing support and advocacy on a national scale.

Beyond U.S. borders, Elderly Care Everywhere has established flood relief camps in India, showcasing its commitment to global humanitarian efforts. The organization's impactful work has been recognized by the government of New Delhi, further highlighting its significant contributions to senior care and welfare. Through these efforts, Elderly Care Everywhere continues to lead the way in senior advocacy, ensuring that the elderly are treated with dignity and respect worldwide.

Thank you for your support of AB-2505. If you have any questions, feel free to email us at connect@elderlycareeverywhere.org