

Date of Hearing: July 2, 2024

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PRIVACY AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, Chair  
SB 1394 (Min) – As Amended April 11, 2024

AS PROPOSED TO BE AMENDED

**SENATE VOTE:** 37-0

**SUBJECT:** Access to remote vehicle technology

**SYNOPSIS**

*Statistically speaking, the most dangerous place for a woman is not out in public, it is in her home. In addition, the most dangerous people for a woman are not strangers, they are the men she knows and has relationships with (e.g. current and former partners, fathers, brothers, and friends). Given where the danger generally lies, for those situations where the danger is also a current partner or someone else who lives in their home, survivors need a safe, quick means of escape.*

*Adding to the risk, the most dangerous time for someone who is in a relationship with a violent abuser is when they decide to leave. According to organizations working with survivors of abuse, when someone being abused in a relationship leaves or attempts to leave, abusers often lash out in an attempt to regain control over their partner or, in some cases, resort to extreme violence, even homicide, because they feel they have nothing left to lose.*

*Since 2012, when General Motors' OnStar debuted Family Link, a service that allowed remote users to track their family members and receive alerts about where the car goes, advocates and experts working with survivors of stalking and domestic abuse have warned about the dangers related to allowing this type of technology to be used in cars without offering a way for it to discreetly be turned off by the driver. Over the last 12 years this technology has become more sophisticated and common with most new cars offering remote vehicle technology that allows someone with a smart phone app to check a car's location, including following the movement of the car in real time; track the history of where the car has been driven to; lock and unlock the vehicle remotely; turn it on or off; set the car's climate controls; make the horn honk; and turn on its lights.*

*As currently in print, this bill is substantially similar to the federal Safe Connections Act (SCA) of 2022 (PL 117-223), which requires mobile service providers to separate the line of a survivor of domestic violence (and other related crimes and abuse), and any individuals in the care of the survivor, from a mobile service contract shared with an abuser within two business days after receiving a request from the survivor. Like the SCA, the purpose of this bill is to require an automobile manufacturer disconnect a vehicle from any remote vehicle technology within two business days of receiving a request from a survivor.*

*The Committee is concerned that allowing two business days to disconnect the technology is too long in the case where a survivor is in immediate danger and needs to use their vehicle to escape an abuser.*

**SUMMARY:** Requires a vehicle manufacturer to separate access to remote vehicle technology from a vehicle no later than two days after receiving a separation request from a survivor of domestic violence. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Defines “connected vehicle service” as any capability provided by or on behalf of a motor vehicle manufacturer that enables a person to remotely obtain data from, or send commands to, a covered vehicle, which may be accomplished through a software application that is designed to be operated on a mobile device.
- 2) Defines “connected vehicle service request” as a request by a driver to terminate or disable a person’s access to a connected vehicle service.
- 3) Defines “covered connected vehicle services account” as an account or other means by which a person enrolls in or obtains access to a connected vehicle service.
- 4) Requires a vehicle manufacturer to do the following:
  - a) Ensure that the connected vehicle service can be immediately disabled by a driver of that vehicle manually while the driver is inside the vehicle by a means that meets the following criteria:
    - i) The method is prominently located and easy to use and does not require access to a remote, online application.
    - ii) The method of manually disabling the services informs the driver of the requirements related to keeping the technology disabled.
    - iii) The method cannot require a password or any log-in information.
    - iv) The method cannot result in the connected vehicle service, vehicle manufacturer or a third-party service provider alerting the owner of the car to the fact that it has been disabled.
    - v) Upon its use the method of disabling the connected vehicle service must remain disabled for a minimum of seven days and capable of only being reenabled by the vehicle manufacturer.
  - b) Reenable the connected vehicle service only under the following circumstances:
    - i) The owner of the vehicle notifies the manufacturer that the connected vehicle service was disabled in error and the driver has not contacted the vehicle manufacturer within the seven-day timeframe to provide the information required by the bill.
    - ii) The driver requests that the connected vehicle service be reenabled.
  - c) If, for technological reasons, a vehicle manufacturer is unable to comply with the previous requirements, it must create a conspicuous mechanism that is easy to use by which the driver or their designated person can submit a connected vehicle service request.

- 5) Requires the driver to submit a connected vehicle service request to the manufacturer within seven days of the date that the technology was manually disabled. The request must include the following:
  - a) The vehicle identification number.
  - b) A copy of any of the following documents that supports that a person has committed, or allegedly committed domestic violence against the driver or someone in their care:
    - i) As signed affidavit from any of the following people acting in the scope of their employment:
      - (1) A licensed medical or mental health care provider.
      - (2) A licensed military medical or mental health care provider.
      - (3) A licensed social worker.
      - (4) A victim services provider.
      - (5) A licensed military victim services provider.
    - ii) A police report.
    - iii) A statement provided by the police to a magistrate judge or other judge.
    - iv) A charging document.
    - v) A protective or restraining order, including military protective orders.
    - vi) Any other relevant document that is an official record.
- 6) Within seven days following the submission of the documentation in 5), requires a driver to provide proof of legal possession of the vehicle, such as a dissolution decree, temporary order, or domestic violence restraining order that awards possession or exclusive use of the vehicle. Legal possession of a vehicle may be established by providing a vehicle title. A court order awarding sole possession or ownership of a vehicle shall take priority over a vehicle title showing joint ownership. Nothing further shall be required of the driver and no fee may be charged.
- 7) Requires the manufacturer to notify the driver that they may contact the driver to confirm a person's access to the remote vehicle technology has been terminated.
- 8) Requires a vehicle manufacturer to provide a notification inside of a vehicle that is installed with a connected vehicle service that shows if it is being used.
- 9) Requires a vehicle manufacturer to detail the above process on its website and connected vehicle service application. An efficient, secure, and user-friendly online submission process for requests must be established including the following:
  - a) A confirmation email acknowledging receipt.

- b) Disclosure of the action taken or of additional information needed.
  - c) If approved, a clear explanation and guidance on how to create their own app account, if necessary, to ensure that the driver can maintain control over the vehicle's remote technology once the person's access to remote vehicle technology has been terminated.
- 10) Requires the vehicle manufacturer to adhere to relevant data protection laws and regulations.
- 11) Provides that the provisions of this act are severable.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Authorizes a court to issue an ex parte order enjoining a party from molesting, attacking, striking, stalking, threatening, sexually assaulting, battering, credibly impersonating, falsely personating, harassing, telephoning, including, but not limited to, making annoying telephone calls, destroying personal property, contacting, either directly or indirectly, by mail or otherwise, coming within a specified distance of, or disturbing the peace of the other party. "Disturbing the peace of the other party" refers to conduct that, based on the totality of the circumstances, destroys the mental or emotional calm of the other party. This conduct may be committed directly or indirectly, including through the use of a third party, and by any method or through any means including, but not limited to, telephone, online accounts, text messages, internet-connected devices, or other electronic technologies. (Fam. Code § 6320.)
- 2) Authorizes an adult person, or a parent or guardian on behalf of a minor or an incapacitated person, to apply to participate in the Safe at Home program by stating that they are a victim of specified conduct, including domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, child abduction, or elder or dependent adult abuse, or is a household member of a victim, designating the Secretary of State (SOS) as the agent for service of process and receipt of mail, and providing the SOS with any address they wish to be kept confidential. (Gov. Code § 6206(a).)
- 3) Establishes the federal Safe Connections Act (SCA) of 2022, which requires mobile service providers to separate the line of a survivor of domestic violence (and other related crimes and abuse), and any individuals in the care of the survivor, from a mobile service contract shared with an abuser within two business days after receiving a request from the survivor. (PL 117-223).
- 4) Establishes the Safe at Home (SAH) address confidentiality program in order to enable state and local agencies to both accept and respond to requests for public records without disclosing the changed name or address of a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. (Chapter 3.1 (commencing with Section 6205) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code.)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** As currently in print, this bill is keyed fiscal.

**COMMENTS:**

1) **Intimate Partner Violence.** Nationally more than one-third of women will experience rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. Nearly 8 million women experience one or more of these abuses by a current or former partner each year. There

are nearly 90 domestic violence related killings in California each year. There were 87 deaths in 2020, 70 were women and 17 were men.<sup>1</sup> The National Domestic Violence Hotline reports that an average of 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence or stalking by an intimate partner in the United States — more than 12 million women and men over the course of a single year. Almost half of all women and men in the US have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetime (48.4% and 48.8%, respectively).<sup>2</sup>

Statistically speaking, the most dangerous place for a woman is not out in public, it is in her home. In addition, the most dangerous people for a woman are not strangers, they are the men she knows and has relationships with (e.g. current and former partners, fathers, brothers, and friends). Given where the danger generally lies, for those situations where the danger is also a current partner or someone else who lives in their home, survivors need a safe, quick means of escape.

Adding to the risk, the most dangerous time for someone who is in a relationship with a violent abuser is when they decide to leave. According to organizations working with survivors of abuse, when someone being abused in a relationship leaves or attempts to leave, abusers often lash out in an attempt to regain control over their partner or, in some cases, resort to extreme violence, even homicide, because they feel they have nothing left to lose.<sup>3</sup> According to Canada's Battered Women Support Services:

Separation is a common theme found within spousal murder-suicide where half of the cases occur after the couple have either separated (26%), were in the process of separating (9%), or had expressed a desire to separate (15%). . . . The statistics outline the reality that the most dangerous time for a survivor/victim is when she leaves the abusive partner; 77 percent of domestic violence-related homicides occur upon separation and there is a 75 percent increase of violence upon separation for at least two years.<sup>4</sup>

With the omnipresent nature of technology that contains remote geo-location capabilities, especially vehicles, leaving an abuser becomes significantly more difficult if the abuser has online access to the survivor's location that allows them to track the survivor's every movement.

2) **Technological Abuse.** Alongside advances in technology are parallel advances in the dangers for people who are or were in relationships with violent perpetrators. The advances have brought new and inventive ways for perpetrators to abuse and torture the people in their lives. In fact, the federal government now recognizes technological abuse as a form of domestic abuse. The Office of Violence against Women housed in the US Department of Justice defines technological abuse as:

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<sup>1</sup> California Partnership to End Domestic Violence. *California Domestic Violence Fact Sheet* (2022) <https://www.cpedv.org/policy-priorities>.

<sup>2</sup> The National Domestic Violence Hotline. *Domestic Violence Statistics*. <https://www.thehotline.org/stakeholders/domestic-violence-statistics/>.

<sup>3</sup> *Will My Partner Be Violent After I Leave? How to predict violence after leaving an abuser*. DomesticShelters.org. (Mar. 24, 2017) <https://www.domesticshelters.org/articles/safety-planning/will-my-partner-be-violent-after-i-leave>.

<sup>4</sup> *Eighteen Months After Leaving Domestic Violence is Still the Most Dangerous Time*, Battered Women's Support Services (Jun. 11, 2020) <https://www.bwss.org/eighteen-months-after-leaving-domestic-violence-is-still-the-most-dangerous-time/>.

An act or pattern of behavior that is intended to harm, threaten, control, stalk, harass, impersonate, exploit, extort, or monitor another person that occurs using any form of technology, including but not limited to: internet enabled devices, online spaces and platforms, computers, mobile devices, cameras and imaging programs, apps, location tracking devices, or communication technologies, or any other emerging technologies.<sup>5</sup>

Specifically, as it relates to this bill and automobile technology, since 2012, when General Motors' OnStar debuted Family Link, a service that allowed remote users to track their family members and receive alerts about where the car goes, advocates and experts working with survivors of stalking and domestic abuse have warned about the dangers related to allowing this type of technology to be used in cars without offering a way for it to discreetly be turned off by the driver.<sup>6</sup> Over the last 12 years this technology has become more sophisticated and common with most new cars offering remote vehicle technology that allows someone with a smart phone app to check a car's location, including following the movement of the car in real time; track the history of where the car has been driven to; lock and unlock the vehicle remotely; turn it on or off; set the car's climate controls; make the horn honk; and turn on its lights.<sup>7</sup>

According to a recent article in *The New York Times*, "Domestic violence experts say that these convenience features are being weaponized in abusive relationships, and that car makers have not been willing to assist victims. This is particularly complicated when the victim is a co-owner of the car, or not named on the title."<sup>8</sup>

3) **Purpose of this bill.** This bill is partially modelled after the federal Safe Connections Act (SCA) of 2022 (PL 117-223). The SCA requires mobile service providers to separate the line of a survivor of domestic violence (and other related crimes and abuse), and any individuals in the care of the survivor, from a mobile service contract shared with an abuser within two business days after receiving a request from the survivor. Like the SCA, the purpose of this bill is to require an automobile manufacturer to provide a method for disconnecting remote vehicle technology in order to protect survivors of domestic violence and allow them to stop an abuser from either tracking their car remotely or using app enabled technology within the car as a weapon.

4) **Author's statement.** According to the author:

We have known for some time that GPS-tracking technology in cars is being exploited by domestic violence abusers but unfortunately, some car manufacturers are refusing to act to address this potentially fatal problem. Survivors of abuse should not have to fear technology as a tool for further victimization by abusers who can track and harass them. SB 1394 creates a process for survivors of domestic abuse to rapidly terminate remote access to a vehicle and ensure their safety and privacy.

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<sup>5</sup> Information on the types of domestic violence and the Office of Violence against Women can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/domestic-violence>.

<sup>6</sup> Lineman, Tracey. "Connected Car Technology Can Enable Abusers to Track Their Victims," *Motherboard, Tech by Vice* (Aug 14, 2018) available at <https://www.vice.com/en/article/gy3kw7/internet-connected-car-technology-can-enable-abusers-to-track-victims>.

<sup>7</sup> Hill, Kashmir. "Your Car Is Tracking You. Abusive Partners May Be, Too." *The New York Times* (Dec. 31, 2023) available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/31/technology/car-trackers-gps-abuse.html>.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

5) **Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Rulemaking.** FCC chair, Jessica Rosenworcel, has called on automakers to help in protecting domestic abuse survivors from the misuse of remote vehicle technology by abusers. As modern vehicles make it increasingly easy for passengers and drivers to access hands-free communication tools, find-your car services, and more, these smart car services can and have been used to stalk, harass, and intimidate survivors of intimate partner violence. Chairwoman Rosenworcel importantly notes, “No survivor of domestic violence and abuse should have to choose between giving up their car and allowing themselves to be stalked and harmed by those who can access its data and connectivity.”<sup>9</sup>

The FCC is currently examining how the agency can use existing law to ensure car manufacturers are taking steps to assist abuse victims and are seeking comment on additional steps the Commission can take to safeguard domestic violence survivors.<sup>10</sup>

6) **Analysis.** As noted previously, this bill is modeled after federal legislation that allows survivors to have their mobile phones separated from family plans or contracts that are connected to their abuser. This allows survivors to keep their phones and phone numbers. Under that law and this legislation, businesses have two business days to break the connection between devices once the business receives a request accompanied by documentation from a survivor. Arguably, someone escaping violence could turn off their phone while leaving an abuser and wait for the time it takes for the mobile phone carrier to separate the phone from the connected account before turning it back on. However, as discussed in detail in previous sections of this analysis, the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship is when the survivor is attempting to leave. Having access to a vehicle is critical for most survivors during that time. Unfortunately, as currently drafted, this bill allows auto manufacturers the same two business-day period to disconnect the remote vehicle technology. Imagine being a survivor in an increasingly dangerous relationship who needs to flee the Friday before Memorial Day. Under this bill, and two similar bills within this Committee’s jurisdiction, an abuser would have five days to track the person fleeing before the connection is broken. This is likely ample time for an abuser to track down their victim and either harm them more or force them to return to their home.

Three bills modeled after the Safe Connection Act were introduced in the Legislature this year. AB 3139 (Weber) and this bill both initially focused solely on applying the policies established in the Act to allowing survivors of domestic abuse to request that an auto manufacturer disconnect their vehicles from any remote capabilities. As noted above, the manufacturers would be provided with two business days to fulfill the request. The third bill, SB 1000 (Ashby and Rubio), which is also before the Committee, takes the policy solutions in the Safe Connection Act and applies it broadly to all connected devices including home appliances, thermostats, locks, doorbells, vehicles, and any other device that is connected remotely to an application.

When it comes to connectivity in vehicles, the Committee has expressed concern about the delayed time frame in all three bills and has proposed amendments to all of them designed to accomplish three key things:

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<sup>9</sup> FCC Media Release (Jan. 11, 2024) <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-399700A1.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Miranda, Shauneen. “FCC chairwoman asks that automakers be subject to a domestic abuse law.” *Axios* (Feb. 28, 2024) <https://www.axios.com/2024/02/28/fcc-automakers-proposal-domestic-abuse>.

1. The driver must be able to manually disable the connectivity from inside the car without needing to log into an account or provide a password.
2. Disabling the technology cannot result in account-holders or registered owner being notified that it has been disconnected by the driver.
3. The survivor must be provided with a grace period that allows her time to get to safety and then gather and submit the documents required to permanently remove the abuser from remote access.

*Creating a safe harbor.* The intent of these amendments is to provide survivors with the immediate protection they need when using their vehicle to escape escalating violence, while allowing them time to submit the necessary information to an auto manufacturer establishing that even though the survivor may not be the registered owner of the vehicle, they have a right to disconnect the technology. The amendments still require that survivors provide the necessary documentation needed to establish their right to the car. This is intended to ensure that abusers cannot further weaponize the vehicle by manually disabling the technology in the car and simply claiming that they are the person being abused in the relationship.

**7) Proposed Committee amendments.** In order to eliminate the waiting period between requesting that the connected service be disabled and the service being turned off, the proposed amendments require that vehicle manufacturers develop a method that allows drivers to manually disable the connected technology.

Amendment #1 – details the new process and requirements:

**28202. (a) (1) A vehicle manufacturer that offers a vehicle for sale, rent, or lease in this state that includes connected vehicle service shall do each of the following:**

**(A) Ensure that the connected vehicle service can be immediately disabled by a driver of the vehicle while that driver is inside the vehicle by a method that meets all of the following criteria:**

**(i) The method of disabling the connected vehicle service is prominently located and easy to use and does not require access to a remote, online application.**

**(ii) Upon its use, the method of disabling the connected vehicle service informs the driver of the requirements of subdivision (b).**

**(iii) The method of disabling the connected vehicle service does not require a password or any log-in information.**

**(iv) Upon its use, the method of disabling the connected vehicle service does not result in the connected vehicle service, vehicle manufacturer, or a third-party service provider sending to the registered or legal owner of the vehicle an email, telephone call, or any other notification related to the connected vehicle service being disabled.**

**(v) Upon its use, the method of disabling the connected vehicle service causes the connected vehicle service to be disabled for a minimum of seven days and capable of being reenabled only by the vehicle manufacturer pursuant to paragraph (2).**

***(B) Reenable the connected vehicle service under the following circumstances:***

***(i) The registered or legal owner of the vehicle notifies the manufacturer that the connected vehicle service was disabled in error and a driver has not contacted the vehicle manufacturer to provide the information required by subdivision (b) within seven days of the connected vehicle service being disabled.***

***(ii) The driver has requested that the connected vehicle service be reenabled from the vehicle manufacturer.***

***(2) If, for technological reasons, a vehicle manufacturer is unable to comply with paragraph (1), the vehicle manufacturer shall create a conspicuous mechanism that is easy to use by which a driver or the driver's designated person can submit a connected vehicle service request.***

***(b) (1) A driver shall submit a connected vehicle service request to a vehicle manufacturer pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 28208 within two days of the date on which the driver used the method of disabling the connected vehicle service pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (a), which shall include the vehicle identification number of the vehicle and a copy of any of the following documents that supports that a person has committed, or allegedly committed, an act of domestic violence against the driver or an individual in the driver's care:***

***(A) A signed affidavit from any of the following individuals acting within the scope of that person's employment:***

***(i) A licensed medical or mental health care provider.***

***(ii) A licensed military medical or mental health care provider.***

***(iii) A licensed social worker.***

***(iv) A victim services provider.***

***(v) A licensed military victim services provider.***

***(B) A police report.***

***(C) A statement provided by the police, including military police, to a magistrate judge or other judge.***

***(D) A charging document.***

***(E) A protective or restraining order, including military protective orders.***

***(2) Following the submission of the documentation pursuant to paragraph (1), a driver shall, within 30 days, provide proof of legal possession of the vehicle, such as a dissolution decree, temporary order, or domestic violence restraining order that awards possession or exclusive use of the vehicle. Legal possession of a vehicle may be established by providing a vehicle title. A court order awarding sole possession or ownership of a vehicle shall take priority over a vehicle title showing joint ownership.***

Amendment #2 – adds the following clarification:

***(g) This section does not authorize or require a vehicle manufacturer to verify ownership of a vehicle, the identity of a driver, or the authenticity of information that is submitted by the driver.***

Amendment #3 – reduces from two days to one day the timeframe provided to vehicle manufacturers to permanently reset the connected vehicle service after receiving the proper documentation.

In addition the author has requested the following amendments:

Amendment #1 – modifying terms and definitions in the following manner

28200. Unless the context requires otherwise, for purposes of this chapter, ~~“remote vehicle technology” means any technology that allows a person who is outside of a vehicle to track the location of, or control any operation of, the vehicle, and includes, but is not limited to, a Global Positioning System (GPS) that tracks the location of the vehicle or an app-based technology that controls any operation of the vehicle.~~ ***chapter, the following terms have the following meanings:***

***(a) “Connected vehicle service” means any capability provided by or on behalf of a motor vehicle manufacturer that enables a person to remotely obtain data from, or send commands to, a covered vehicle, which may be accomplished through a software application that is designed to be operated on a mobile device.***

***(b) “Connected vehicle service request” means a request by a driver to terminate or disable a person’s access to a connected vehicle service.***

***(c) “Covered connected vehicle services account” means an account or other means by which a person enrolls in or obtains access to a connected vehicle service.***

Amendment #2 – adds a severability clause:

***The provisions of this act are severable. If any provision of this act 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.***

8) **Larger policy questions.** While this bill has the potential to make a significant difference in the lives of those fleeing abusive partners, it raises larger policy considerations related to the invasive nature of technology that would benefit from additional attention. With the proliferation of surveillance and tracking technology, including built in vehicle location technology, tracking devices that can easily be concealed in a car or in someone’s belongings, in home and public surveillance cameras, automated license plate recognition tools, not to mention the ability to track someone using the smartphones that are virtually universal, at what point has surveillance gone too far? Should Californians simply accept the complete loss of privacy as they move through their lives in public and private spaces?

Much like the focus that is being placed on the impact of social media, advancement in artificial technology, and the collection and sale of personal information for profit, constant surveillance

by private individuals, businesses, and government has a profound impact on Californians' lives. Rather than considering the risks of one device or technological advancement at a time, at some point, it might behoove the Legislature, and this Committee in particular, to explore the larger surveillance policy questions, including the dangers associated with the unchecked proliferation of surveillance tools and their impact on Californians' privacy rights, especially for those who are at risk of abuse.

9) **Related legislation.** AB 3139 (Weber, 2024) requires the manufacturer of a vehicle with remote vehicle technology allowing the vehicle to be tracked to equip the vehicle with a feature that allows the driver to immediately sever the connection between the vehicle and the remote application. In addition, it prohibits manufacturers from restoring the connection for one week, while allowing a survivor of domestic abuse the opportunity to provide a vehicle separation request accompanied by the required documentation. This bill is currently pending in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

SB 1000 (Ashby and Rubio, 2024) commencing January 1, 2026, would require an account manager, as defined, to deny an abuser, as defined, access to a connected device commencing no later than two days after a device protection request is submitted to the account manager by a victim of that abuser, and would set forth the requirements for a victim to submit a device protection request and the requirements that an account manager make the request available. This bill is currently pending in this Committee.

#### ***ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:***

Writing in support of the version of the bill currently in print, the co-sponsors, University of California, Irvine, School of Law Domestic Violence Clinic convey the urgency of enacting legislation in order to protect survivors:

Attorneys and advocates working with domestic violence survivors across California have identified vehicle technology abuse as a dangerous and real threat to survivors' safety. While safe access to a vehicle is often a lifeline for abuse survivors, survivors are increasingly remotely surveilled and harassed by their abusers through vehicle technology, including after being granted a civil restraining order. For example, advanced technology features allow abusers to remotely lock and unlock vehicles, start and stop vehicles, adjust safety settings, and record audio and video. Further, abusers can access GPS-tracking data to stalk survivors in real time. Survivors are often unaware that their vehicle is being tracked, which further heightens the danger.

The increasing prevalence of vehicle technology abuse has been the subject of recent national reporting informed by SB 1934's co-sponsor EndTAB. In December of 2023, The New York Times published the article, "Your Car is Tracking You. Abusive Partners May Be Too." In the same month, Reuters published, "An Abused Wife Took on Tesla Over Tracking Tech. She Lost." In both news stories, the carmakers refused to sever the abusers' access from the survivors' vehicle accounts, even though the abused women had court orders. Unfortunately, there are multiple other examples of Mercedes, Tesla, and other car manufacturers refusing to act to protect survivors. SB 1394 provides needed protections and a streamlined process to address this alarming issue.

The California Partnership to End Domestic Violence writes in support of the version of the bill currently in print:

Survivors are increasingly remotely surveilled and harassed by their abusers through vehicle technology. Advanced technology features now allow abusers to remotely lock and unlock vehicles, start and stop vehicles, turn off electric charging capability, adjust safety settings, and record audio and video.

[. . .]

California carmakers are currently routinely denying survivors' requests to sever their abusers' remote vehicle access from the survivor's own vehicle. Currently, no carmaker has a formal policy on how to respond to these requests, even when severing access to the car is courtordered. It is time for California to catch up with rapid technological advances and implement laws that will protect survivors from all forms of domestic abuse.

## **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

### **Support**

EndTAB (co-sponsor)

University of California, Irvine School of Law Domestic Violence Clinic (co-sponsor)

California Partnership to End Domestic Violence

California Women's Law Center

Electronic Frontier Foundation

Family Violence Appellate Project

Laura's House

Oakland Privacy

Rivian

Women's Transitional Living Center, INC.

### **Opposition**

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