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**AB-1303 Communications: lifeline telephone service program.** (2025-2026)

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**Assembly Bill No. 1303**

**CHAPTER 347**

An act to amend Section 2891 of, and to add Section 876.5 to, the Public Utilities Code, relating to communications.

[ Approved by Governor October 06, 2025. Filed with Secretary of State October 06, 2025. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AB 1303, Valencia. Communications: lifeline telephone service program.

Existing law vests the Public Utilities Commission with regulatory authority over public utilities, including telephone corporations. The Moore Universal Telephone Service Act establishes the Universal Lifeline Telephone Service program in order to provide low-income households with access to affordable basic residential telephone service. Existing law requires the commission to accept applications for lifeline telephone service according to procedures specified by the commission.

This bill would prohibit the commission, its staff, the lifeline program's third-party administrator, and lifeline service providers, and their contractors, agents, successors, or assignees, from sharing, disclosing, or otherwise making accessible any information provided by an applicant or subscriber to the lifeline program, or a subprogram or pilot program of the lifeline program, to any agency of a local government, a state government, or the federal government, or to an immigration authority, as defined, without a court-ordered subpoena or valid judicial warrant, except as specified. The bill would authorize the commission, its staff, the lifeline program's third-party administrator, and lifeline service providers, and the providers' agents, successors, or assignees, to request, but would prohibit those entities from requiring, applicants and subscribers to provide social security numbers to apply to, or participate in, the lifeline program.

Existing law prohibits a telephone or telegraph corporation from making certain categories of personal information available to any other person or corporation without first obtaining the residential subscriber's consent in writing. Existing law exempts information provided to a law enforcement agency in response to lawful process from that prohibition.

This bill would define "lawful process," for that purpose, to mean an action taken pursuant to a court-ordered subpoena or judicial warrant.

Under existing law, a violation of the Public Utilities Act or any order, decision, rule, direction, demand, or requirement of the commission is a crime.

Because certain provisions of this bill would be part of the act and therefore a violation of the bill's requirements, or a violation of a commission action implementing its requirements, would be a crime, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

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.

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

### **SECTION 1.** Section 876.5 is added to the Public Utilities Code, to read:

**876.5.** (a) The commission, its staff, the lifeline program's third-party administrator, and lifeline service providers, and their contractors, agents, successors, or assignees, shall not share, disclose, or otherwise make accessible any information provided by an applicant or subscriber to the lifeline program, or a subprogram or pilot program of the lifeline program, to any agency of a local government, a state government, or the federal government, or to any immigration authority without a court-ordered subpoena or valid judicial warrant.

(b) This section does not prohibit the furnishing of applications, records, and data to other public agencies to the extent required for verifying an applicant's or subscriber's eligibility for lifeline service.

(c) This section does not prohibit the commission, its staff, the lifeline program's third-party administrator, or lifeline service providers from using aggregated subscriber or applicant data for analysis, reporting, or program management if the aggregated subscriber or applicant data cannot be used to determine the identities of the persons to whom the data pertains, alone or in combination with other data.

(d) The commission, its staff, the lifeline program's third-party administrator, and lifeline service providers, and the providers' agents, successors, or assignees, may request, but may not require, applicants and subscribers to provide social security numbers, in whole or in part, to apply to, or participate in, the lifeline program.

(e) To the extent Section 1621 of Title 8 of the United States Code applies to this article, the Legislature finds and declares that this article is a state law that may provide assistance and services for individuals not lawfully present in the United States within the meaning of subsection (d) of Section 1621 of Title 8 of the United States Code.

(f) For purposes of this section, both of the following definitions apply:

(1) "Immigration authority" means any federal, state, or local officer, employee, or person performing immigration enforcement functions.

(2) "Immigration enforcement" includes any and all efforts to investigate, enforce, or assist in the investigation or enforcement of any federal civil immigration law, and also includes any and all efforts to investigate, enforce, or assist in the investigation or enforcement of any federal criminal immigration law that penalizes a person's presence in, entry, or reentry to, or employment in, the United States.

### **SEC. 2.** Section 2891 of the Public Utilities Code is amended to read:

**2891.** (a) A telephone or telegraph corporation shall not make available to any other person or corporation, without first obtaining the residential subscriber's consent, in writing, any of the following information:

(1) The subscriber's personal calling patterns, including any listing of the telephone or other access numbers called by the subscriber, but excluding the identification to the person called of the person calling and the telephone number from which the call was placed, subject to the restrictions in Section 2893, and also excluding billing information concerning the person calling that federal law or regulation requires a telephone corporation to provide to the person called.

(2) The residential subscriber's credit or other personal financial information, except when the corporation is ordered by the commission to provide this information to any electrical, gas, heat, telephone, telegraph, or water corporation, or centralized credit check system, for the purpose of determining the creditworthiness of new utility subscribers.

(3) The services that the residential subscriber purchases from the corporation or from independent suppliers of information services who use the corporation's telephone or telegraph line to provide service to the residential subscriber.

(4) Demographic information about individual residential subscribers, or aggregate information from which individual identities and characteristics have not been removed.

(b) Any residential subscriber who gives their written consent for the release of one or more of the categories of personal information specified in subdivision (a) shall be informed by the telephone or telegraph corporation regarding the identity of each person or corporation to whom the information has been released, upon written request. The corporation shall notify every residential subscriber of the provisions of this subdivision whenever consent is requested pursuant to this subdivision.

(c) Any residential subscriber who has, pursuant to subdivision (b), given written consent for the release of one or more of the categories of personal information specified in subdivision (a) may rescind this consent upon submission of a written notice to the telephone or telegraph corporation. The corporation shall cease to make available any personal information about the subscriber, within 30 days following receipt of the notice given pursuant to this subdivision.

(d) This section does not apply to any of the following:

(1) Information provided by residential subscribers for inclusion in the corporation's directory of subscribers.

(2) Information customarily provided by the corporation through directory assistance services.

(3) Postal ZIP Code information.

(4) Information provided under supervision of the commission to a collection agency by the telephone corporation exclusively for the collection of unpaid debts.

(5) Information provided to an emergency service agency responding to a 911 telephone call or any other call communicating an imminent threat to life or property.

(6) Information provided to a law enforcement agency in response to lawful process.

(7) Information that is required by the commission pursuant to its jurisdiction and control over telephone and telegraph corporations.

(8) Information transmitted between telephone or telegraph corporations pursuant to the furnishing of telephone service between or within service areas.

(9) Information required to be provided by the corporation pursuant to rules and orders of the commission or the Federal Communications Commission regarding the provision over telephone lines by parties other than the telephone and telegraph corporations of telephone or information services.

(10) The name and address of the lifeline customers of a telephone corporation provided by that telephone corporation to a public utility for the sole purpose of low-income ratepayer assistance outreach efforts. The telephone corporation receiving the information request pursuant to this paragraph may charge the requesting utility for the cost of the search and release of the requested information.

(11) Information provided in response to a request pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 530.8 of the Penal Code.

(e) Every violation of this section is grounds for a civil suit by the aggrieved residential subscriber against the telephone or telegraph corporation and its employees responsible for the violation.

(f) For purposes of this section, both of the following definitions apply:

(1) "Access number" means a telex, teletex, facsimile, computer modem, or any other code that is used by a residential subscriber of a telephone or telegraph corporation to direct a communication to another subscriber of the same or another telephone or telegraph corporation.

(2) "Lawful process" means an action taken pursuant to a court-ordered subpoena or judicial warrant.

**SEC. 3.** 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.