

September 19, 2025

California Senate Bill 54 Presentation

Overview

At the July 18, 2025, Public Safety Committee meeting, Vice Chair Kevin Shin requested that Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS) provide a presentation on California Senate Bill 54 (Allen, 2017). The request included an overview of the legislation itself, how it outlines the responsibilities and limitations of local jurisdictions, and specifically how ARJIS' role aligns with those requirements. Vice Chair Shin also

asked for clarification on ways in which ARJIS supports local law enforcement agencies under SB 54, as well as how ARJIS operates in relation to federal partners to ensure compliance with state law while maintaining effective data-sharing and collaboration practices. This presentation is intended to provide Committee members with a clear understanding of ARJIS' activities at both the local and federal levels, and how these efforts intersect with statutory obligations under SB 54.

Action: Information

Staff will present an informational briefing on California Senate Bill 54 (Allen, 2017). The briefing will include an overview of the legislation, a summary of Automated Regional Justice Information System's (ARJIS) responsibilities and activities at the local level, and an explanation of ARJIS' role in relation to federal partners.

Fiscal Impact:

None.

Schedule/Scope Impact:

None.

Key Considerations

ARJIS is a criminal justice data-sharing hub in San Diego County that enables law enforcement agencies to work more efficiently in our region by facilitating interagency cooperation to address crime. Over 5,000 state, local, and federal law enforcement personnel from over 60 agencies use ARJIS through the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS). The San Diego County Sheriff's Office is the region's controlling agency monitoring compliance with CLETS policies and procedures.

Senate Bill 54

SB 54 became effective on January 1, 2018, and limits state and local law enforcement assistance in immigration enforcement in the State of California. On October 1, 2018, the Criminal Justice Information Systems (CJIS) Division of the California Department of Justice (DOJ) released an Information Bulletin (Attachment 1) providing guidance to law enforcement agencies on best practices regarding the governance of databases affected by SB 54.

In February 2019, the California DOJ CJIS Division released an updated Policies, Practices, and Procedures Manual for the use of CLETS (Attachment 2). The update included policy changes related to SB 54 and outlined the requirements for the use of CJIS information, as well as directives for user audits, access, and security.

In December 2023, the California DOJ CJIS Division released an updated Policies, Practices, and Procedures Manual for the use of CLETS (Attachment 3). The update included changes related to the inclusion of qualifying tribal agencies, training, notification of security breaches, and user background checks, but did not address any additional changes concerning SB 54.

In implementing changes to the ARJIS system under SB 54, ARJIS coordinated with the CLETS Controlling Agency in the region, the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, and took the following actions:

- Immigration Records Access Removed: ARJIS removed access to immigration-related records for all users.
- Immigration Terms Deleted: ARJIS removed the ability for agencies to share new data with references to immigration status in its applications, including criminal charges and identification types using terms such as "illegal alien," "federal immigration," and "undocumented."
- Reason for Search Language: ARJIS updated its database systems to require that users enter a valid reason, such as a crime case number, for each database search. This makes security audits of user searches easier by confirming that each search is conducted for a valid reason.
- Login Screen Language Updated: ARJIS added the California DOJ-recommended acknowledgment language to the criminal misuse warnings on each of its' application login screens.

"Federal, state or local law enforcement agencies shall not use any non-criminal history information contained within this database for immigration enforcement purposes. This restriction does not pertain to any information that is regarding a person's immigration or citizenship status pursuant to 8 U.S.C. §§ 1373 and 1644."

- ARJIS Training Updated: ARJIS updated its training materials to include warnings about misuse of the system for immigration enforcement

Specific to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) access to the ARJIS database, the California DOJ guidance from October 2018, provided that federal immigration authorities should not be denied access to law enforcement databases solely based on their status as a federal immigration authority. ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) chose not to sign a new CLETS Subscriber Agreement that requires system users to comply with SB 54 and subsequently ARJIS disabled all ICE ERO accounts in October 2019, consistent with a similar action taken by the San Diego County Sheriff's Department.

Next Steps

ARJIS will continue to monitor guidance related to SB 54 and take appropriate steps in collaboration with its member agencies.

Anthony Ray, Director of ARJIS

- Attachments:
1. California Justice Information Services, Information Bulletin, 10-1-2018
 2. CLETS Policies, Practices, and Procedures 2019
 3. CLETS Policies, Practices, and Procedures 2023