



## Civil Rights Department

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July 7, 2025

For Immediate Release

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916-938-4113

### Civil Rights Department Shares New Resources to Help Protect Access to Time Off for Californians Impacted by Violence

*One in ten crime victims nationwide reported losing a job or being demoted as a result of needing time off*

**SACRAMENTO** – The California Civil Rights Department (CRD) today shared [new guidance](#) and a [model notice for businesses to give to employees](#) to help protect the ability of Californians impacted by violence to take time off work. The new guidance and model notice aim to ensure workers and employers understand current leave protections under California law following the recent passage of [Assembly Bill 2499](#). According to a [nationwide survey conducted in 2022](#), one in ten crime victims reported that they lost a job or were demoted as a result of needing time off.

“California is continuing to take meaningful steps to support survivors of violence — including sexual and gender-based violence — by ensuring that those impacted have access to critical workplace protections like leave and other supports,” **said California First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom**. “Experiencing violence can upend every part of a person’s life — from their mental health to their safety to their economic security. Survivors often share how the demands of legal processes, court proceedings, and personal recovery can make it nearly impossible to maintain stability at work. And this is not a small issue. Nearly one in three women in California will experience sexual violence in their lifetime. Every survivor deserves to be met with compassion, dignity, and the resources they need to heal — and this policy moves us closer to that vision.”

“In California, we’re committed to protecting the rights of victims and their families,” **said CRD Director Kevin Kish**. “Whether it’s time off to help a loved one find a new place to live or to support your own mental health, there are leave protections in place in our state for workers who have been affected by violence. We all have the right to recover and seek help without having to worry about getting fired or demoted.”

## **Stronger Protections, New Enforcement**

In 2024, Governor Newsom [signed AB 2499](#) into law, expanding leave protections for Californians impacted by violence and transferring enforcement of those rights to CRD. Among other changes, the law provides additional clarity on the types of incidents that are covered and ensures Californians have access to time off to help family members or a designated person impacted by violence. Protected leave can be used for a range of activities, including taking part in safety planning to help keep you or your family members safe from future violence, caring for a family member recovering from injuries, seeking mental health services, getting help relocating, or enrolling children in a new school.

The law also provides protections for Californians who need time off to directly participate in or assist family members with certain legal proceedings, e.g., court hearings related to an act of violence or helping a family member obtain a restraining order. While some of the law's protections only apply to employers with 25 or more workers, other protections apply to all employers in California. Whether through new informational materials, in-person events, or online webinars, CRD regularly works to help ensure all Californians understand their civil rights and have the tools they need to exercise them.

Earlier this year, First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom also convened California's first statewide Working Group on Support for Survivors of Sexual Assault, which [developed a comprehensive roadmap](#) to strengthen California's response and resources for survivors. Co-chaired with retired Alameda County District Attorney Nancy O'Malley, the group's work identified critical gaps and offered recommendations to improve how survivors are met with dignity, respect, and a path to safety and justice. Leave protections under AB 2499 reflect the kind of survivor-centered approach the working group has called for — ensuring survivors are supported, not penalized, as they rebuild their lives.

## **Time Off Rights for Victims of Violence**

As part of the new protections, employers are required to inform each employee of their rights related to time off because of a qualifying act of violence, such as domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or incidents that result in bodily injury or involve a dangerous weapon. A few key examples of protections under AB 2499 include:

- You can take up to 12 weeks off work if you are a victim or have lost a loved one to violence.
- You may take up to 10 days off work — or up to five days for relocation purposes — to help a family member impacted by violence.
- You have the right to ask for a reasonable accommodation to make sure you are safe at work.
- Your employer cannot discipline you, treat you differently, or fire you because you have experienced an act of violence or are the family member of someone who has.
- You have the right to take time off work for jury service or to appear in court as a witness to comply with a subpoena or court order.

## Knowing Your Rights Helps Protect Your Rights

A key part of CRD's mission to enforce the state's robust civil rights laws and reduce discrimination is ensuring Californians have accurate and timely information about their rights and responsibilities. CRD does this through a range of proactive outreach efforts, including [conducting trainings and presentations](#), [publishing and disseminating guides and factsheets](#), and working directly with community partners to identify and respond to civil rights challenges faced by Californians across the state. Many of CRD's webinars and trainings [can also be watched at any time](#) on the department's YouTube channel.

If you or someone you know has experienced employment discrimination, CRD may be able to assist you through its [complaint process](#). The department also [provides general information and factsheets online](#) about civil rights protections for members of the public.

The department's new guidance on protected leave for Californians impacted by violence is available [here](#). A copy of the model notice for employers to inform workers of their rights under AB 2499 is available [here](#).

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*The California Civil Rights Department (CRD) is the state agency charged with enforcing California's civil rights laws. CRD's mission is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and state-funded programs and activities, and from hate violence and human trafficking. For more information, visit [calcivilrights.ca.gov](https://calcivilrights.ca.gov).*

