

AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 12, 2016
AMENDED IN SENATE MARCH 28, 2016

SENATE BILL

No. 1212

Introduced by Senator Hueso

February 18, 2016

An act relating to telecommunications.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1212, as amended, Hueso. "2-1-1" information and referral network.

Under existing law, the Public Utilities Commission has regulatory authority over public utilities, including telephone corporations. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), pursuant to its existing authority over the North American Numbering Plan, has established several abbreviated dialing codes, including designating the number 9-1-1 for persons to dial to obtain emergency services, designating the number 3-1-1 for persons to dial for nonemergency police assistance, and designating the number 2-1-1 for persons to dial to obtain information about, and referral to, community social services. Pursuant to authority delegated by the FCC to state regulatory bodies and its existing statutory authority, the Public Utilities Commission has established procedures for implementing 2-1-1 dialing in California.

This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to facilitate the expansion of 2-1-1 services into those counties in California where they are lacking and to support a comprehensive statewide database that will connect all callers to information and referrals they need. The bill would additionally state the intent of the Legislature to facilitate access to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery information, and referral services, uniformly in the state, especially in hard-to-serve rural areas,

through a universally available telephone service. The bill would authorize moneys appropriated to the Public Utilities Commission to be expended to help close telephone service gaps in counties lacking access to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery information, and referral services, through a universally available high-quality basic telephone service to all residents of California regardless of region. The bill would additionally authorize moneys appropriated to the Public Utilities Commission to be used to fund and improve a ~~coordinated~~ *coordinated, publicly owned* database to provide regional referrals to help with all aspects of disaster planning, recovery, and response.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

3 (1) In order to create a statewide disaster preparedness, response,
4 and recovery system and to facilitate the reach of local services to
5 vulnerable populations, this act is established to expand 2-1-1
6 services to all areas of California that do not currently have access
7 to this vital service.

8 (2) 2-1-1 service is a free, accessible, three-digit telephone
9 number that gives everyone in covered areas access to needed
10 community services. First established in 2005, 2-1-1 service now
11 covers 38 California counties. It is available 24 hours a day, seven
12 days a week, allowing residents to access information about health
13 and human services, emergency care, crisis intervention, and
14 disaster preparedness, response, and recovery when they need it
15 most.

16 (3) 2-1-1 service is a natural hub for disaster-related information
17 and plays a critical role during emergencies and disasters, such as
18 fires, floods, earthquakes, terrorist attacks, and epidemics, reducing
19 nonemergency call volume on 9-1-1 lines, which frees up
20 emergency responders to deal with true life-or-death situations,
21 thus leveraging local public safety resources.

22 (4) 2-1-1 service also increases the reach of government,
23 nonprofit, and community programs by offering callers information
24 on and access to a variety of health and human services, rent and
25 utility assistance, physical and mental health resources,

1 employment opportunities, support for older Americans and
2 persons with disabilities, and support for families with special
3 needs.

4 (5) 2-1-1 service call centers are staffed with highly trained
5 specialists who have expertise in navigating the web of health and
6 human services in a particular community and who have up-to-date
7 information and guidance for callers in times of disaster.

8 (6) 2-1-1 service call center specialists are able to answer calls
9 in over 150 different languages; they are able to provide critical
10 health information to otherwise hard-to-reach ethnic populations.

11 (7) Twenty rural counties in California currently do not have
12 access to 2-1-1 services, creating holes in referral services and
13 disaster response capability.

14 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature, in enacting this act, to
15 facilitate the expansion of 2-1-1 services into those counties in
16 California where they are lacking and to support a comprehensive
17 statewide database that will connect all callers to the information
18 and referrals they need.

19 (c) It is the intent of the Legislature to facilitate access to disaster
20 preparedness, response, and recovery information, and referral
21 services, uniformly in the state, especially in hard-to-serve rural
22 areas, through a universally available *2-1-1* telephone service.

23 (d) Moneys appropriated to the Public Utilities Commission
24 may be expended to help close telephone service gaps in counties
25 lacking access to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery
26 information, and referral services, through a universally available,
27 high-quality basic *2-1-1* telephone service to all residents of
28 California regardless of region. Moneys appropriated to the Public
29 Utilities Commission may also be used to fund and improve a
30 ~~coordinated~~ *coordinated, publicly owned* database to provide
31 regional referrals to help with all aspects of disaster planning,
32 recovery, and response.

O