

March 21, 2023

The Honorable Thomas J. Umberg, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3240
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 21 (Umberg) - Support

Dear Senator Umberg:

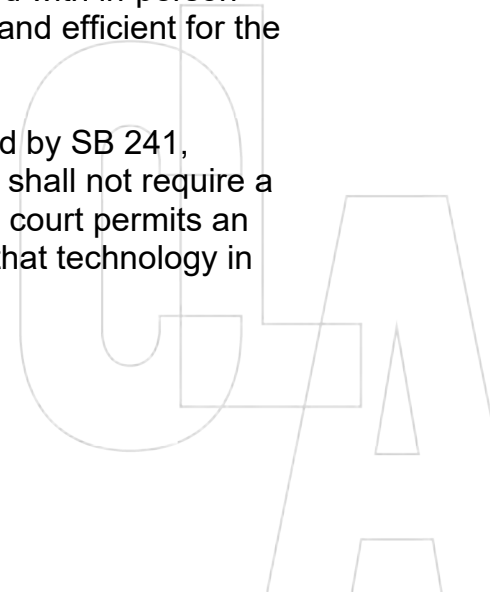
The California Lawyers Association (CLA) is pleased to support Senate Bill 21, which extends until January 1, 2026, the existing authorization for a party to appear remotely and a court to conduct conferences, hearings, proceedings, and trials in civil cases, in whole or in part, through the use of remote technology.

CLA has nearly 80,000 members, including lawyers in private practice, in-house counsel, government lawyers, judges, law professors, and others affiliated with the legal profession who are not lawyers. Our members practice throughout the State of California in virtually all areas of the law.

We have consistently supported the appropriate use of remote technology in hearings, trials, and other court proceedings. Since the enactment of SB 241 (Umberg) in 2021, CLA's members have participated in countless court proceedings utilizing remote technology.

We have seen the tremendous benefit of providing the option to participate remotely in court proceedings, including decreased costs to the litigants and increased access to justice. Among other things, remote access opens up opportunities for working parents, caregivers, and others to participate in proceedings by avoiding travel costs and significant time commitments that are associated with in-person court appearances. Remote access is also more cost-effective and efficient for the lawyers, thereby reducing the costs to their clients.

We note that Code of Civil Procedure section 367.75, as enacted by SB 241, contains appropriate protections. Among other things, the court shall not require a party to appear through the use of remote technology, and if the court permits an appearance through remote technology, the court must ensure that technology in



The Honorable Thomas J. Umberg, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee
March 21, 2023
Page 2

the courtroom enables all parties, whether appearing remotely or in person, to fully participate in the conference, hearing, or proceeding. Although remote proceedings may not be appropriate in all situations, Code of Civil Procedure section 367.75 provides needed flexibility.

Remote proceedings are a critical option that should be retained.

For all of these reasons, CLA strongly supports SB 21.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Evans', with a stylized, cursive flourish extending to the right.

Jeremy M. Evans
President