

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to courts; prohibiting civil arrests for persons attending court proceedings;
1.3 providing civil remedies; proposing coding for new law as Minnesota Statutes,
1.4 chapter 480C.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. **[480C.01] DEFINITIONS.**

1.7 Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** For purposes of sections 480C.01 to 480C.04, the following
1.8 terms have the meanings given.

1.9 Subd. 2. **Arrest.** "Arrest" has the meaning given in section 629.30, subdivision 1.

1.10 Subd. 3. **Civil arrest.** "Civil arrest" means an arrest that is not:

1.11 (1) for an alleged criminal violation of any federal, state, or local law;

1.12 (2) for any violation of any condition of probation, parole, pretrial release, conditional
1.13 release, or supervised release for which arrest is otherwise authorized by law; or

1.14 (3) supported by a judicial warrant or judicial order authorizing the arrest.

1.15 Subd. 4. **Court companion.** "Court companion" means:

1.16 (1) a spouse, domestic partner, or person who has a romantic relationship with a party,
1.17 witness, or potential witness;

1.18 (2) a biological parent, foster parent, adoptive parent, or stepparent of a party, witness,
1.19 or potential witness;

1.20 (3) minor children or other persons under the care of a party, witness, or potential witness;

2.1 (4) interpreters and translators assisting a party, witness, or potential witness;

2.2 (5) a person assisting a party, witness, or potential witness with reading or completing
2.3 court forms or documents;

2.4 (6) persons providing health care or assistance to a party, witness, or potential witness
2.5 to allow that individual to participate in the court proceeding;

2.6 (7) a case manager, social worker, domestic violence advocate, or sexual assault advocate
2.7 for a party, witness, or potential witness; or

2.8 (8) a person transporting a party, witness, or potential witness to or from a court
2.9 proceeding.

2.10 Subd. 5. **Court proceeding.** "Court proceeding" means the business conducted by a
2.11 state court or a matter pending under the jurisdiction or supervision of a state court, including,
2.12 but not limited to, civil proceedings and criminal proceedings.

2.13 Subd. 6. **Judicial warrant.** "Judicial warrant" or "judicial order authorizing the arrest"
2.14 means a written order from a state court or federal Article III court that directs a law
2.15 enforcement agency or some other person who is specifically named in the order to arrest
2.16 a person.

2.17 Subd. 7. **Law enforcement agency.** "Law enforcement agency" means any local, state,
2.18 or federal entity with statutory police powers and the ability to employ individuals authorized
2.19 to make arrests.

2.20 Sec. 2. **[480C.02] CIVIL ARREST PROHIBITED; CERTAIN LOCATIONS.**

2.21 Subdivision 1. **Privilege from civil arrest.** A person attending a court proceeding in
2.22 which the person is a party, a witness, a potential witness, or a court companion is privileged
2.23 from civil arrest while going to, remaining at, and returning from the court proceeding,
2.24 including:

2.25 (1) at the place of the court proceedings;

2.26 (2) within the courthouse building;

2.27 (3) on the premises of the courthouse, including parking facilities serving the courthouse;

2.28 (4) on any sidewalk, parkway, or street surrounding the courthouse and its premises;

2.29 and

2.30 (5) on any public way within 1,000 feet of the courthouse including a sidewalk, parkway,
2.31 or street.

3.1 Subd. 2. **Construction.** (a) Nothing in this section shall be construed to narrow, or in
3.2 any way lessen, any common law or other right or privilege of a person privileged from
3.3 arrest under this section or otherwise.

3.4 (b) The protections in this section apply regardless of whether a judicial order is issued
3.5 under subdivision 4 or a court otherwise implements this section by a rule or order.

3.6 Subd. 3. **Criminal law violations.** Nothing in this section precludes the execution of a
3.7 criminal arrest warrant issued by a judge or a criminal arrest based on probable cause for a
3.8 violation of criminal law.

3.9 Subd. 4. **Court order.** In order to maintain access to the court and open judicial
3.10 proceedings for all persons in their individual capacity and to prevent interference with the
3.11 needs of judicial administration, a court may issue appropriate judicial orders to protect the
3.12 privilege from arrest under this section.

3.13 **Sec. 3. [480C.03] CIVIL ACTION; REMEDIES.**

3.14 (a) A person who violates section 480C.02 is liable for civil damages for false
3.15 imprisonment, including actual damages and statutory damages of \$10,000, if that person
3.16 knew or reasonably should have known that the person arrested was a party, witness, potential
3.17 witness, or court companion while going to, remaining at, or returning from the court
3.18 proceeding at the time of the arrest.

3.19 (b) A court may grant any other equitable or declaratory relief it deems appropriate and
3.20 just.

3.21 (c) A court may award to a prevailing plaintiff costs and reasonable attorney fees.

3.22 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective August 1, 2026, and applies to causes
3.23 of action accruing on or after that date.

3.24 **Sec. 4. [480C.04] LIABILITY LIMITATIONS; DEFENSES.**

3.25 (a) Nothing in sections 480C.01 to 480C.03 permits an action against the judicial branch
3.26 or judicial branch personnel acting lawfully under their duty to maintain safety and order
3.27 in the courts.

3.28 (b) Nothing in sections 480C.01 to 480C.03 affects any right or defense, including any
3.29 existing qualified immunity defense, of any person, police officer, peace officer or public
3.30 officer, or any Minnesota court system personnel acting lawfully.