

Senate Bill No. 820

CHAPTER 428

An act to add Title 2.5 (commencing with Section 1633.1) to Part 2 of Division 3 of the Civil Code, and to amend Section 18608 of the Financial Code, relating to electronic transactions.

[Approved by Governor September 16, 1999. Filed
with Secretary of State September 16, 1999.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 820, Sher. Electronic transactions.

Existing law contains provisions regulating contracts and requires certain contracts to be in writing and signed. Existing law contains certain special provisions applicable to electronic transactions, such as provisions relating to electronic funds transfer, but does not generally set forth the effect of transactions entered into electronically.

This bill would enact the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. It would generally apply to electronic transactions, except that it would not apply to the creation and execution of wills and testamentary trusts, and would not apply to certain other transactions.

The bill would provide that a record or signature may not be denied legal effect or enforceability solely because it is in electronic form. The bill would provide that a contract may not be denied legal effect or enforceability solely because an electronic record was used in its formation. It would provide that if a law requires a record to be in writing, or if a law requires a signature, an electronic record satisfies the law. The bill would enact related provisions. The bill would authorize the provision of written information by electronic record. The bill would set forth provisions governing changes and errors, the effect of electronic signatures, and admissibility in evidence.

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

SECTION 1. Title 2.5 (commencing with Section 1633.1) is added to Part 2 of Division 3 of the Civil Code, to read:

TITLE 2.5. ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS

1633.1. This title may be cited as the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act.

1633.2. In this title the following terms have the following definitions:



(a) “Agreement” means the bargain of the parties in fact, as found in their language or inferred from other circumstances and from rules, regulations, and procedures given the effect of agreements under laws otherwise applicable to a particular transaction.

(b) “Automated transaction” means a transaction conducted or performed, in whole or in part, by electronic means or electronic records, in which the acts or records of one or both parties are not reviewed by an individual in the ordinary course in forming a contract, performing under an existing contract, or fulfilling an obligation required by the transaction.

(c) “Computer program” means a set of statements or instructions to be used directly or indirectly in an information processing system in order to bring about a certain result.

(d) “Contract” means the total legal obligation resulting from the parties’ agreement as affected by this title and other applicable law.

(e) “Electronic” means relating to technology having electrical, digital, magnetic, wireless, optical, electromagnetic, or similar capabilities.

(f) “Electronic agent” means a computer program or an electronic or other automated means used independently to initiate an action or respond to electronic records or performances in whole or in part, without review by an individual.

(g) “Electronic record” means a record created, generated, sent, communicated, received, or stored by electronic means.

(h) “Electronic signature” means an electronic sound, symbol, or process attached to or logically associated with an electronic record and executed or adopted by a person with the intent to sign the electronic record.

(i) “Governmental agency” means an executive, legislative, or judicial agency, department, board, commission, authority, institution, or instrumentality of the federal government or of a state or of a county, municipality, or other political subdivision of a state.

(j) “Information” means data, text, images, sounds, codes, computer programs, software, data bases, or the like.

(k) “Information processing system” means an electronic system for creating, generating, sending, receiving, storing, displaying, or processing information.

(l) “Person” means an individual, corporation, business trust, estate, trust, partnership, limited liability company, association, joint venture, governmental agency, public corporation, or any other legal or commercial entity.

(m) “Record” means information that is inscribed on a tangible medium or that is stored in an electronic or other medium and is retrievable in perceivable form.

(n) “Security procedure” means a procedure employed for the purpose of verifying that an electronic signature, record, or performance is that of a specific person or for detecting changes or



errors in the information in an electronic record. The term includes a procedure that requires the use of algorithms or other codes, identifying words or numbers, encryption, or callback or other acknowledgment procedures.

(o) “Transaction” means an action or set of actions occurring between two or more persons relating to the conduct of business, commercial, or governmental affairs.

1633.3. (a) Except as otherwise provided in subdivisions (b) and (c), this title applies to electronic records and electronic signatures relating to a transaction.

(b) This title does not apply to transactions subject to the following laws:

(1) A law governing the creation and execution of wills, codicils, or testamentary trusts.

(2) Division 1 (commencing with Section 1101) of the Uniform Commercial Code, except Sections 1107 and 1206.

(3) Divisions 3 (commencing with Section 3101), 4 (commencing with Section 4101), 5 (commencing with Section 5101), 8 (commencing with Section 8101), 9 (commencing with Section 9101), and 11 (commencing with Section 11101) of the Uniform Commercial Code.

(4) A law that requires that specifically identifiable text or disclosures in a record or a portion of a record be separately signed, including initialed, from the record. However, this paragraph does not apply to Section 1677 or 1678 of this code or Section 1298 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

(c) This title does not apply to any specific transaction described in Section 17511.5 of the Business and Professions Code, Section 56.11, 56.17, 798.14, 1133, or 1134 of, Sections 1350 to 1376, inclusive, of, Section 1689.6, 1689.7, or 1689.13 of, Chapter 2.5 (commencing with Section 1695) of Title 5 of Part 2 of Division 3 of, Section 1720, 1785.15, 1789.14, 1789.16, 1789.33, or 1793.23 of, Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 1801) of Title 2 of Part 4 of Division 3 of, Section 1861.24, 1862.5, 1917.712, 1917.713, 1950.5, 1950.6, 1983, 2924b, 2924c, 2924f, 2924i, 2924j, 2924.3, or 2937 of, Article 1.5 (commencing with Section 2945) of Chapter 2 of Title 14 of Part 4 of Division 3 of, Section 2954.5 or 2963 of, Chapter 2b (commencing with Section 2981) or 2d (commencing with Section 2985.7) of Title 14 of Part 4 of Division 3 of, or Section 3071.5 of, the Civil Code, subdivision (b) of Section 18608 or Section 22328 of the Financial Code, Section 1358.15, 1365, 1368.01, 1368.1, 1371, or 18035.5 of the Health and Safety Code, Section 658, 662, 663, 664, 666, 667.5, 673, 677, 678, 678.1, 786, 10083, 10086, 10087, 10102, 10113.7, 10127.7, 10127.9, 10127.10, 10197, 10199.44, 10199.46, 10235.16, 10235.40, 10509.4, 10509.7, 11624.09, or 11624.1 of the Insurance Code, Section 779.1, 10010.1, or 16482 of the Public Utilities Code, or Section 9975 or 11738 of the Vehicle Code. An electronic record may not be substituted for any notice that is



required to be sent pursuant to Section 1162 of the Code of Civil Procedure. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to prohibit the recordation of any document with a county recorder by electronic means.

(d) This title applies to an electronic record or electronic signature otherwise excluded from the application of this title under subdivision (b) when used for a transaction subject to a law other than those specified in subdivision (b).

(e) A transaction subject to this title is also subject to other applicable substantive law.

(f) The exclusion of a transaction from the application of this title under subdivision (b) or (c) shall be construed only to exclude the transaction from the application of this title, but shall not be construed to prohibit the transaction from being conducted by electronic means if the transaction may be conducted by electronic means under any other applicable law.

1633.4. This title applies to any electronic record or electronic signature created, generated, sent, communicated, received, or stored on or after January 1, 2000.

1633.5. (a) This title does not require a record or signature to be created, generated, sent, communicated, received, stored, or otherwise processed or used by electronic means or in electronic form.

(b) This title applies only to a transaction between parties each of which has agreed to conduct the transaction by electronic means. Whether the parties agree to conduct a transaction by electronic means is determined from the context and surrounding circumstances, including the parties' conduct. Except for a separate and optional agreement the primary purpose of which is to authorize a transaction to be conducted by electronic means, an agreement to conduct a transaction by electronic means may not be contained in a standard form contract that is not an electronic record. An agreement in such a standard form contract may not be conditioned upon an agreement to conduct transactions by electronic means. An agreement to conduct a transaction by electronic means may not be inferred solely from the fact that a party has used electronic means to pay an account or register a purchase or warranty. This subdivision may not be varied by agreement.

(c) A party that agrees to conduct a transaction by electronic means may refuse to conduct other transactions by electronic means. If a seller sells goods or services by both electronic and nonelectronic means and a buyer purchases the goods or services by conducting the transaction by electronic means, the buyer may refuse to conduct further transactions regarding the goods or services by electronic means. This subdivision may not be varied by agreement.

(d) Except as otherwise provided in this title, the effect of any of its provisions may be varied by agreement. The presence in certain



provisions of this title of the words “unless otherwise agreed,” or words of similar import, does not imply that the effect of other provisions may not be varied by agreement.

1633.6. This title shall be construed and applied according to all of the following:

(1) To facilitate electronic transactions consistent with other applicable law.

(2) To be consistent with reasonable practices concerning electronic transactions and with the continued expansion of those practices.

(3) To effectuate its general purpose to make uniform the law with respect to the subject of this title among states enacting it.

1633.7. (a) A record or signature may not be denied legal effect or enforceability solely because it is in electronic form.

(b) A contract may not be denied legal effect or enforceability solely because an electronic record was used in its formation.

(c) If a law requires a record to be in writing, an electronic record satisfies the law.

(d) If a law requires a signature, an electronic signature satisfies the law.

1633.8. (a) If parties have agreed to conduct a transaction by electronic means and a law requires a person to provide, send, or deliver information in writing to another person, that requirement is satisfied if the information is provided, sent, or delivered, as the case may be, in an electronic record capable of retention by the recipient at the time of receipt. An electronic record is not capable of retention by the recipient if the sender or its information processing system inhibits the ability of the recipient to print or store the electronic record.

(b) If a law other than this title requires a record to be posted or displayed in a certain manner, to be sent, communicated, or transmitted by a specified method, or to contain information that is formatted in a certain manner, all of the following rules apply:

(1) The record shall be posted or displayed in the manner specified in the other law.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (2) of subdivision (d), the record shall be sent, communicated, or transmitted by the method specified in the other law.

(3) The record shall contain the information formatted in the manner specified in the other law.

(c) If a sender inhibits the ability of a recipient to store or print an electronic record, the electronic record is not enforceable against the recipient.

(d) The requirements of this section may not be varied by agreement, except as follows:

(1) To the extent a law other than this title requires information to be provided, sent, or delivered in writing but permits that



requirement to be varied by agreement, the requirement under subdivision (a) that the information be in the form of an electronic record capable of retention may also be varied by agreement.

(2) A requirement under a law other than this title to send, communicate, or transmit a record by first-class mail may be varied by agreement to the extent permitted by the other law.

1633.9. (a) An electronic record or electronic signature is attributable to a person if it was the act of the person. The act of the person may be shown in any manner, including a showing of the efficacy of any security procedure applied to determine the person to which the electronic record or electronic signature was attributable.

(b) The effect of an electronic record or electronic signature attributed to a person under subdivision (a) is determined from the context and surrounding circumstances at the time of its creation, execution, or adoption, including the parties' agreement, if any, and otherwise as provided by law.

1633.10. If a change or error in an electronic record occurs in a transmission between parties to a transaction, the following rules apply:

(1) If the parties have agreed to use a security procedure to detect changes or errors and one party has conformed to the procedure, but the other party has not, and the nonconforming party would have detected the change or error had that party also conformed, the conforming party may avoid the effect of the changed or erroneous electronic record.

(2) In an automated transaction involving an individual, the individual may avoid the effect of an electronic record that resulted from an error made by the individual in dealing with the electronic agent of another person if the electronic agent did not provide an opportunity for the prevention or correction of the error and, at the time the individual learns of the error, all of the following conditions are met:

(i) The individual promptly notifies the other person of the error and that the individual did not intend to be bound by the electronic record received by the other person.

(ii) The individual takes reasonable steps, including steps that conform to the other person's reasonable instructions, to return to the other person or, if instructed by the other person, to destroy the consideration received, if any, as a result of the erroneous electronic record.

(iii) The individual has not used or received any benefit or value from the consideration, if any, received from the other person.

(3) If neither paragraph (1) nor (2) applies, the change or error has the effect provided by other law, including the law of mistake, and the parties' contract, if any.

(4) Paragraphs (2) and (3) may not be varied by agreement.



1633.11. (a) If a law requires that a signature be notarized, the requirement is satisfied with respect to an electronic signature if an electronic record includes, in addition to the electronic signature to be notarized, the electronic signature of a notary public together with all other information required to be included in a notarization by other applicable law.

(b) In a transaction, if a law requires that a statement be signed under penalty of perjury, the requirement is satisfied with respect to an electronic signature, if an electronic record includes, in addition to the electronic signature, all of the information as to which the declaration pertains together with a declaration under penalty of perjury by the person who submits the electronic signature that the information is true and correct.

1633.12. (a) If a law requires that a record be retained, the requirement is satisfied by retaining an electronic record of the information in the record, if the electronic record reflects accurately the information set forth in the record at the time it was first generated in its final form as an electronic record or otherwise, and the electronic record remains accessible for later reference.

(b) A requirement to retain a record in accordance with subdivision (a) does not apply to any information the sole purpose of which is to enable the record to be sent, communicated, or received.

(c) A person may satisfy subdivision (a) by using the services of another person if the requirements of subdivision (a) are satisfied.

(d) If a law requires a record to be retained in its original form, or provides consequences if the record is not retained in its original form, that law is satisfied by an electronic record retained in accordance with subdivision (a).

(e) If a law requires retention of a check, that requirement is satisfied by retention of an electronic record of the information on the front and back of the check in accordance with subdivision (a).

(f) A record retained as an electronic record in accordance with subdivision (a) satisfies a law requiring a person to retain a record for evidentiary, audit, or like purposes, unless a law enacted after the effective date of this title specifically prohibits the use of an electronic record for a specified purpose.

(g) This section does not preclude a governmental agency from specifying additional requirements for the retention of a record subject to the agency's jurisdiction.

1633.13. In a proceeding, evidence of a record or signature may not be excluded solely because it is in electronic form.

1633.14. (a) In an automated transaction, the following rules apply:

(1) A contract may be formed by the interaction of electronic agents of the parties, even if no individual was aware of or reviewed the electronic agents' actions or the resulting terms and agreements.



(2) A contract may be formed by the interaction of an electronic agent and an individual, acting on the individual's own behalf or for another person, including by an interaction in which the individual performs actions that the individual is free to refuse to perform and which the individual knows or has reason to know will cause the electronic agent to complete the transaction or performance.

(b) The terms of the contract are determined by the substantive law applicable to it.

1633.15. (a) Unless the sender and the recipient agree to a different method of sending that is reasonable under the circumstances, an electronic record is sent when the information is addressed properly or otherwise directed properly to the recipient and either (1) enters an information processing system outside the control of the sender or of a person that sent the electronic record on behalf of the sender, or (2) enters a region of an information processing system that is under the control of the recipient.

(b) Unless the sender and the recipient agree to a different method of receiving that is reasonable under the circumstances, an electronic record is received when the electronic record enters an information processing system that the recipient has designated or uses for the purpose of receiving electronic records or information of the type sent, in a form capable of being processed by that system, and from which the recipient is able to retrieve the electronic record.

(c) Subdivision (b) applies even if the place the information processing system is located is different from the place the electronic record is deemed to be received under subdivision (d).

(d) Unless otherwise expressly provided in the electronic record or agreed between the sender and the recipient, an electronic record is deemed to be sent from the sender's place of business and to be received at the recipient's place of business or, if the recipient is an individual acting on his or her own behalf, at the recipient's place of residence. For purposes of this subdivision, the following rules apply:

(1) If the sender or recipient has more than one place of business, the place of business of that person is the place having the closest relationship to the underlying transaction.

(2) If the sender or the recipient does not have a place of business, the place of business is the sender's or recipient's residence, as the case may be.

(e) An electronic record is received under subdivision (b) even if no individual is aware of its receipt.

(f) Receipt of an electronic acknowledgment from an information processing system described in subdivision (b) establishes that a record was received but, by itself, does not establish that the content sent corresponds to the content received.

(g) If a person is aware that an electronic record purportedly sent under subdivision (a), or purportedly received under subdivision (b), was not actually sent or received, the legal effect of the sending



or receipt is determined by other applicable law. Except to the extent permitted by the other law, this subdivision may not be varied by agreement.

1633.16. If a law other than this title requires that a notice of the right to cancel be provided or sent, an electronic record may not substitute for a writing under that other law unless, in addition to satisfying the requirements of that other law and this title, the notice of cancellation may be returned by electronic means. This section may not be varied by agreement.

1633.17. No state agency, board, or commission may require, prohibit, or regulate the use of an electronic signature in a transaction in which the agency, board, or commission is not a party unless a law other than this title expressly authorizes the requirement, prohibition, or regulation.

SEC. 2. Section 18608 of the Financial Code is amended to read:

18608. (a) A premium finance agreement may contain a power of attorney or other authority enabling the company to cancel the insurance contract or contracts listed in the agreement in the event of default in the terms thereof.

(b) Upon the exercise of such a right to cancel, the company shall mail to the insured, to his or her last known address or to the address shown on the premium finance agreement at least 10 days prior to cancellation, a notice of its intent to cancel the insurance contract or contracts.

(c) The liability of a company to any person or corporation upon the exercise of such a right or authority of cancellation shall be limited to the amount of the principal balance, except in the event of willful failure by the company to mail the notice required by this section.

