

Date of Hearing: April 20, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Lori D. Wilson, Chair

AB 1588 (Stefani) – As Amended March 16, 2026

SUBJECT: Vehicles: Sideshow Accountability and Community Safety Act

SUMMARY: Establishes new criminal penalties for engaging in an exhibition of speed, where the violation occurred as part of a sideshow, and expands the definition of a sideshow.

Specifically, **this bill**:

- 1) Provides that if a person is convicted of a violation of engaging in an exhibition of speed on a highway or in an off-street parking facility, as specified, where the violation occurred as part of a sideshow, and the vehicle used in the violation is registered to that person, the vehicle may be impounded at the registered owner's expense for not less than 1 day nor more than 30 days.
- 2) Punishes a person convicted of engaging in an exhibition of speed on a highway or in an off-street parking facility, as specified, where the violation occurred as part of a sideshow, as follows:
 - a) A conviction is punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for not less than 24 hours nor more than 90 days or by a fine of not less than \$355 nor more than \$1,000, or by both that fine and imprisonment;
 - b) If the driver proximately causes bodily injury to a person other than the driver, the conviction is punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for not less than 30 days nor more than six months or by a fine of not less than \$500 nor more than \$1,000, or by both that fine and imprisonment;
 - c) If the driver proximately causes specified injuries, including loss of consciousness, a concussion, a bone fracture or a wound requiring extensive suturing to a person other than the driver, the conviction is punishable as an alternate felony-misdemeanor (wobbler) by imprisonment for 16 months or two or three years or by imprisonment in a county jail for not less than 30 days nor more than six months, or by a fine of not less than \$500 nor more than \$1,000, or by both that fine and imprisonment;
 - d) If the conviction is for an offense that occurred within five years of the date of a prior offense that resulted in a conviction for this same offense, that person shall be punished by imprisonment in a county jail for not less than four days nor more than six months and by a fine of not less than \$500 nor more than one thousand dollars \$1,000;
 - e) If the perpetration of the most recent offense within the five-year period proximately causes bodily injury to a person other than the driver, a person convicted of that second violation shall be imprisoned in a county jail for not less than 30 days nor more than six months and by a fine of not less than \$500 nor more than \$1,000; and,
 - f) If the perpetration of the most recent offense within the five-year period proximately causes serious bodily injury, as defined, to a person other than the driver, a person convicted of that second violation shall be imprisoned in the state prison for sixteen months, or two or three years, or in a county jail for not less than 30 days nor more than one year, and by a fine of not less than \$500 nor more than \$1,000.

- 3) Expands the definition of a “sideshow,” as follows:
- a) Specifies that this means an event or gathering in which two or more persons barricade, block, impede, or otherwise obstruct traffic upon or access to a highway or off-street parking facility without the consent of the owner, operator, or agent thereof, for the purpose of performing motor vehicle stunts, motor vehicle speed contests, motor vehicle exhibitions of speed, or reckless driving;
 - b) Removes the requirement that the event is for the purpose of performing certain vehicle crimes for spectators; and,
 - c) States that a sideshow may involve the use or operation of any motor vehicle, including, but not limited to, motorcycles or off-highway motor vehicles, regardless of whether or not those vehicles display license plates or are registered.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Prohibits a person from engaging in a motor vehicle speed contest on a highway or in an off-street parking facility (speed contest), and from aiding or abetting a speed contest. (Vehicle code section [VEH] 23109, subds. (a) & (b).)
- 2) Defines “motor vehicle speed contest” to include a motor vehicle race against another vehicle, a clock, or other timing device. (VEH 23109, subd. (a).)
- 3) Punishes a speed contest as follows:
 - a) Punishes a person convicted of engaging in a speed contest by imprisonment in a county jail for 24 hours to 90 days or by a fine of \$355 to \$1,000, or by both, 40 hours of community service, and a 90-day to six-month license suspension at the court’s discretion, with the option for a restricted license; (VEH 23109, subd. (e)(1).)
 - b) Punishes a person convicted of engaging in a speed contest that proximately causes bodily injury to another person by 30 days to six months in county jail or by a fine of \$500 to \$1,000, or by both; (VEH 23109, subd. (f)(1).)
 - c) Punishes a person convicted of engaging in a speed contest that proximately causes specified injuries to another person, including loss of consciousness, a concussion, a bone fracture or a wound requiring extensive suturing as a wobbler, punishable by imprisonment for 16 months or two or three years, or by 30 days to six months in county jail, a fine of \$500 to \$1,000, or by both; and, (VEH 23109.1.)
 - d) Punishes a person convicted of engaging in a speed contest where the offense occurred within five years of the date of the same offense that resulted in a conviction, by imprisonment in a county jail for four days to six months, a fine of \$500 to \$1,000, and a six month license suspension; if the most recent offense causes bodily injury to another person it is punishable by 30 days to six months in county jail; if the most recent offense causes serious bodily injury to another person, as defined, it is punishable as a wobbler by imprisonment in state prison for 16 months or two or three years or 30 days to one year in county jail, and a fine of \$500 to \$1,000. (VEH 23109, subd. (f)(1)-(4).)
- 4) Prohibits a person from engaging in a motor vehicle exhibition of speed on a highway or in an off-street parking facility (exhibition of speed) and from aiding and abetting a motor vehicle exhibition of speed. (VEH 23109, subd. (c).)

- 5) Defines “exhibition of speed” as accelerating or driving at a rate of speed that is dangerous and unsafe in order to show off or make an impression on someone else. (*People v. Grier* (1964) 226 Cal.App.2d 360, 364; CALCRIM No. 2202 (2026).)
- 6) Prohibits a person from, for the purpose of facilitating or aiding or as an incident to a speed contest or exhibition, in any manner obstructing or placing a barricade or obstruction or assisting or participating in placing a barricade or obstruction upon a highway or in an off-street parking facility. (VEH 23109, subd. (d).)
- 7) Punishes a person convicted of aiding and abetting a speed contest, engaging in an exhibition of speed, aiding and abetting an exhibition of speed, or obstructing or placing a barricade upon a highway or parking facility for the purpose of facilitating a speed contest or exhibition of speed, by imprisonment in a county jail for up to 90 days, by a fine of up to \$500, or by both. (VEH 23109, subd. (i)(1).)
- 8) Authorizes a court, commencing January 1, 2029, if a person engages in an exhibition of speed or aids or abets an exhibition of speed, to suspend the person’s driving privileges for 90 days to six months, only if the violation occurred as part of a side show, with the option for a restricted license at the court’s discretion. (VEH 23109, subd. (i)(2)(A)-(B).)
- 9) Defines “sideshow” to mean an event in which two or more persons block or impede traffic on a highway or in an off-street parking facility for the purpose of performing motor vehicle stunts, motor vehicle speed contests, motor vehicle exhibitions of speed, or reckless driving, for spectators. (VEH 23109, subd. (i)(2)(A)(2).)
- 10) Authorizes vehicle impound, including impoundment of a vehicle involved in a speed contest, exhibitions of speed, or reckless driving, subject to the following:
 - a) States that any removal of a vehicle is a seizure under the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States and Section 13 of Article I of the California Constitution, and shall be reasonable and subject to the limits set forth in Fourth Amendment jurisprudence; (VEH 22650, subd. (b).)
 - b) Authorizes a peace officer and other specified persons to remove a vehicle, subject to specified notice, storage, and release requirements, in a variety of enumerated circumstances, including where a vehicle is parked on a highway in a position that obstructs traffic or creates a hazard to other traffic, and if the officer arrests a person driving a vehicle for an alleged offense, and the officer is required, permitted to take, and does take, the person into custody, except as specified; (Veh. Code, §§ 22651 – 22856.)
 - c) Authorizes a peace officer to remove a vehicle when the vehicle was used by a person who was engaged in a speed contest, and when the person was arrested and taken into custody for that offense by a peace officer; (VEH 22651.6.)
 - d) Provides that if a person is convicted of engaging in a speed contest and the vehicle used in the offense is registered to that person, the vehicle may be impounded at the registered owner’s expense for one day to 30 days; (VEH 23109, subd. (h).)
 - e) Authorizes a peace officer who determines that a person engaged in a speed contest, exhibition of speed, or reckless driving, but excluding aiding and abetting an exhibition of speed, to immediately arrest and take into custody that person, cause the removal and seizure of the vehicle used in the offense, and the seized motor vehicle may be impounded for up to 30 days; (VEH 23109.2, subd. (a).)

- f) Provides that if a peace officer arrests a person for obstructing or placing a barricade upon a highway or parking facility for the purpose of facilitating a speed contest, as specified, and causes the seizure of the vehicle pursuant to peace officer authority to remove a vehicle if the officer arrests a person driving a vehicle for an alleged offense where the officer is required or permitted take the person into custody, the peace officer shall not be required to take the person into custody; and, (VEH 23109.3.)
- g) Requires a magistrate presented with a peace officer affidavit establishing reasonable cause to believe that a vehicle, as specified, was an instrumentality used in the peace officer's presence in violation of specified crimes, including engaging in a motor vehicle speed contest, engaging in a motor vehicle exhibition of speed or aiding and abetting a motor vehicle exhibition of speed, to issue a warrant authorizing any peace officer to immediately seize and remove the vehicle, to be impounded for up to 30 days. (VEH 14602.7, subd. (a)(1).)

11) Punishes reckless driving as follows:

- a) Defines reckless driving as driving on a highway or off-street parking facility in willful or wanton disregard for the safety of persons or property, and punishes this offense by five to 90 days in county jail or a fine of \$145 to \$1,000, or by both; (VEH 23103.)
- b) Punishes reckless driving proximately causing bodily injury to another by 30 days to six months in jail or a fine of \$220 to \$1,000, or by both; (VEH 23104, subd. (a).)
- c) Punishes reckless driving that proximately causes great bodily injury to another person, who has previously been convicted of specified vehicle crimes, as a wobbler punishable by imprisonment for 16 months, or two or three years, or by 30 days to six months in county jail or a fine of \$220 to \$1,000, or by both; and, (VEH 23104, subd. (a).)
- d) Punishes reckless driving that proximately causes specified injuries to another, as a wobbler, punishable by imprisonment for 16 months, or two or three years, or by 30 days to six months in county jail, a fine of \$220 to \$1,000, or by both. (VEH 23105.)

12) Provides, generally, that for a person arrested for reckless driving, offenses related to participating in a speed contest or exhibition of speed, as specified, where the arresting officer is not required to take the person before a magistrate, whether the person will be taken into custody or released and given a notice to appear, is at the discretion of the arresting officer. (VEH 40303.)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: *This bill was first heard in Assembly Public Safety Committee. Various provisions of this bill enhance penalties for a person convicted of participating in a motor vehicle sideshow. This analysis will focus on the provision of the bill authorizing a vehicle to be impounded up to 30 days after being convicted of the crime of participating in a motor vehicle sideshow. The 30-day impoundment period mirrors the existing 30-day impoundment for a person convicted of participating in a motor vehicle speed contest (i.e. cars racing each other).*

SB 1758 (Kopp) Chapter 1221, Statutes of 1994 gave law enforcement a new tool to enforce vehicle code violations—the ability to impound someone's vehicle for driving while unlicensed (DWU) or driving with a suspended license (DWS).

As a result of that law, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), in conjunction with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration commissioned a series of studies to evaluate the deterrence effect of impounding a vehicle. While a study on the general deterrent effect of the law “did not find compelling evidence of a general deterrent impact of vehicle impoundment and forfeiture on crashes for one of the main groups it targets,” another study on the specific deterrent effect found the law had a great impact on future traffic offenses.

The DMV report, *An Evaluation of the Specific Deterrent Effect of Vehicle Impoundment on Suspended, Revoked and Unlicensed Drivers in California* (DeYoung, 1997), found that first-time offenders who had their vehicles impounded for DWU or DWS saw a 23.8% drop in subsequent convictions for DWU or DWS. For repeat offenders, subsequent violations dropped 34.2%.

After SB 1758, the Legislature began expanding the violations for which a vehicle could be impounded. AB 2288 (Aguiar), Chapter 884, Statutes of 1996 expanded vehicle impoundments to include speed contests. SB 1489 (Perata) Chapter 411, Statutes of 2002, also known as the U’kendra K. Johnson Memorial Act, granted law enforcement the ability to impound a vehicle for reckless driving after Ms. Johnson was killed by a vehicle fleeing a sideshow. While existing law permits law enforcement to go to a magistrate to seek a 30-day impoundment for reckless driving or fleeing the police, the code section does not explicitly permit law enforcement to go to a judge to ask for an impoundment for a vehicle where the person is being charged with engaging in a speed contest or a motor vehicle exhibition of speed.

During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, cities saw an increase in street racing and sideshows, in part because there were fewer vehicles on the road. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) responded to 25,953 calls involving a motor vehicle speed contest or exhibition of speed in 2020, nearly 3,500 more calls than the prior year. In 2020, CHP cited 341 individuals with a violation of motor vehicle exhibition of speed, 141 more than the year before.

Citations and calls reporting speed racing and motor vehicle exhibitions of speed have continued to grow. In 2022, CHP received over 31,000 calls involving a motor vehicle speed contest or motor vehicle exposition of speed. That number dropped to 27,265 in 2023. CHP issued 1,487 citations for both violations in 2022 and 2023.

Various bills have been introduced over the years to permit a 30-day impoundment of a vehicle after a person is convicted. SB 510 (Hall) of 2015 and AB 1393 (Friedman) of 2017 were vetoed by Governor Brown, and AB 1407 (Friedman) of 2019 was vetoed by Governor Newsom. In Governor Newsom’s veto message of AB 1407, he argued: “*This bill would impose a mandatory 30-day impound penalty for a vehicle used in connection with reckless driving or street racing on a second or subsequent conviction.*”

Under current law, a conviction for reckless driving is punishable by a total fine of between \$684 and \$4,175 and possible jail time of between 5 and 90 days. A conviction for engaging in a first-offense speed contest is punishable by a total fine of between \$1,551 and \$4,175, jail time between 1 and 90 days, 40 hours of community service, and potential driver's license suspension between 90 days and 6 months. Subsequent convictions have even stronger penalties.

Courts currently have the authority to impound vehicles based on the totality of facts and circumstances of each case. This bill reduces the courts' discretion in deciding to impound a vehicle, as well as the length of time the vehicle is impounded.

I am not persuaded that limiting judicial discretion for these cases is warranted.”

Unlike previous bills vetoed by Governor Brown and Governor Newsom, this bill provides judicial discretion on whether or not to permit an impoundment and is not a mandatory 30-day impoundment. It is aligned with AB 3085 (Gipson) Chapter 504, Statutes of 2024, which authorized a magistrate judge to impound a vehicle that participated in a motor vehicle exhibition of speed (which includes sideshows) for up to 30 days prior to a conviction.

Expanded definition of motor vehicle sideshow: A motor vehicle is any vehicle that is self-propelled. This includes motorcycles and off-highway motor vehicles. While this bill “expands” the definition of what is included in a motor vehicle sideshow, these vehicles, under existing law, already qualify for the existing offense. This bill removes the element of a sideshow that requires the event to have “spectators.” Often times the only people participating in these events are the drivers themselves. This would remove an unnecessary element of the crime, making it easier to prove a motor vehicle sideshow took place.

According to the author, “Illegal sideshows in California have grown into highly organized and increasingly dangerous events that threaten the safety of communities across the state. These sideshow events frequently involve blocked intersections, reckless stunts, and the presence of firearms. They endanger not only participants, but also innocent bystanders, other motorists, first responders, and in some cases have resulted in the deaths of spectators. AB 1588 closes important gaps in the law and increases penalties for repeat offenders and those who cause injury to spectators. By equipping law enforcement with stronger tools to identify, apprehend, and hold participants accountable, AB 1588 aims to deter dangerous behavior, curb sideshow activity, and enhance safety for communities, motorists, and first responders alike.”

Wring in support of this bill, the *California Narcotics Officers’ Association*, state that “AB 1588 will provide more tools for law enforcement to better respond to organized sideshow events and aims to prevent the harm caused by these illegal activities. This bill strengthens existing penalties for repeat offenders and those who cause serious injury during a sideshow, closes loopholes in the existing sideshow laws and improves public safety.

Specifically, AB 1588 provides more tools and improves accountability for repeat offenders by:

- 1) Authorizing courts to grant a warrant for the immediate seizure and impoundment of a vehicle committing a sideshow offense.
- 2) Adding motorbikes and dirt bikes to the sideshow framework, closing enforcement gaps when unlicensed and unlabeled dirt bikes are used to perform dangerous stunts or block city streets.
- 3) Makes bodily injury during a sideshow and a repeat conviction of a sideshow offense a wobblers.
- 4) Declares vehicles found to be used in a sideshow a public nuisance and becomes subject to forfeiture upon conviction of the vehicle operator.

This bill will help keep our streets and highways safer by ensuring that those who would endanger our communities are appropriately held accountable.”

The San Francisco Public Defenders, *writing in opposition to this bill*, argue ““Based on evidence, AB 1588 (Stefani) will be ineffective. Oakland, Alameda County, San Jose, and Fresno increased fines for sideshow participation, and it did not lead to meaningful reduction in the number or scale of sideshows. While Oakland increased its fines in 2023, sideshows in Oakland are still prevalent. In 2024, the Oakland Police Department’s Special Operations Division stated that violent crimes, such as sideshow incidents had actually increased. This year hundreds of spectators still gathered at sideshows, and the Oakland Police Department reports that in 2025, OPD has seized more than 170 vehicles connected to sideshow activity in Oakland.”

“This aligns with well-established research: higher fines do not deter behavior that is social, impulsive, or collective. Instead, financial penalties of this scale fall most heavily on low-income residents, deepening cycles of poverty and punishment rather than improving public safety. Indeed, “fines, fees, and financial penalties can trap low-income residents in a maze of poverty and punishment and prevent people from succeeding.”

Related and previous legislation: SB 1198 (Menjivar) of 2026 would extend the license suspension and vehicle impoundment periods for reckless driving, as specified. SB 1198 is pending a hearing in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 1978 (Sanchez) Chapter 501, 2024 authorized a peace officer to impound a vehicle without taking the driver into custody for obstructing or placing a barricade upon a highway, or an offstreet parking facility for the purpose of facilitating or aiding a speed contest or exhibition of speed.

AB 2186 (Wallis) Chapter 502, statutes of 2024 would allow a peace officer to arrest a person and impound a vehicle if the person was engaged in an exhibition of speed that occurs in an offstreet parking facility. AB 2186 is pending hearing in this committee.

AB 3085 (Gipson) Chapter 504, Statutes of 2024, authorized a magistrate judge to impound a vehicle that participated in a motor vehicle exhibitions of speed (which include sideshows) for up to 30 days prior to a conviction.

AB 2000 (Gabriel), Chapter 436, Statutes of 2022, made it a crime for a person to engage in a motor vehicle speed contest in an offstreet parking facility or an exhibition of speed in an offstreet parking facility, or to aid or abet therein.

AB 3 (V. Fong), Chapter 611, Statutes of 2021, allows a court to suspend a person’s driver’s license if they were convicted of a motor vehicle exhibition of speed and that charge stemmed from their participation in a motor vehicle sideshow.

AB 2876 (Jones-Sawyer), Chapter 592, Statutes of 2018, clarifies that the protections against unreasonable seizures provided by the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution apply even when a vehicle is removed pursuant to an authorizing statute.

AB 2175 (Aguiar-Curry), Chapter 314, Statutes of 2018, among other things, allows impoundment of a vessel when an officer has probable cause to believe it was used in the commission of a crime.

AB 353 (Cedillo), Chapter 653, Statutes of 2011, requires law enforcement officers conducting a sobriety checkpoint to make reasonable attempts to identify the registered owner of a vehicle being driven by a person under the influence, and to release the vehicle to the owner or to obtain the owner's consent to release the vehicle to a licensed driver by the end of the checkpoint.

SB 67 (Perata), Chapter 727, Statutes of 2007, reenacted provisions that were allowed to sunset that provide for vehicle impoundments when a person is arrested for reckless driving, exhibition of speed, or a speed contest.

AB 74 (Muratsuchi), of 2023 would have provided that a vehicle used in a sideshow or street takeover is a public nuisance which may be subject to forfeiture. AB 74 failed passage in Assembly Transportation Committee.

AB 822 (Alanis), of 2023 would include engaging in a motor vehicle speed contest or an exhibition of speed as offenses for which a peace officer may impound a vehicle pursuant to a court warrant. The hearing was cancelled at the request of the author in Assembly Public Safety Committee.

AB 1407 (Friedman), of 2019 would have required a vehicle that is determined to have been involved in a speed contest to be impounded for 30 days, as specified. AB 1407 was vetoed.

AB 410 (Nazarian) of 2019 would have allowed a vehicle to be impound based on a declaration submitted by a police officer that a vehicle was involved in a motor vehicle sideshow. AB 410 failed passage in Assembly Public Safety Committee.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

AAA Northern California, Nevada & Utah
American Medical Response West
Arcadia Police Officers' Association
Auto Club of Southern California (AAA)
Brea Police Association
Burbank Police Officers' Association
California Association of School Police Chiefs
California Coalition of School Safety Professionals
California Mobility and Parking Association
California Narcotic Officers' Association
California Reserve Peace Officers Association
City and County of San Francisco
City of Beverly Hills
City of Norwalk
City of Pico Rivera
Claremont Police Officers Association
Corona Police Officers Association
County of San Joaquin
Culver City Police Officers' Association
Fullerton Police Officers' Association
Los Angeles School Police Management Association

Los Angeles School Police Officers Association
Mayor Daniel Lurie, City and County of San Francisco
Murrieta Police Officers' Association
Newport Beach Police Association
Palos Verdes Police Officers Association
Placer County Deputy Sheriffs' Association
Pomona Police Officers' Association
Riverside Sheriffs' Association

Opposition

Anti Police-Terror Project
Buen Vecino
Initiate Justice
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area
Local 148 Los Angeles County Public Defender's Union
San Francisco Public Defender
South Bay People Power

Oppose Unless Amended

California Public Defenders Association
Smart Justice California, a Project of Beyond Impact

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