

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 1588 (Stefani)

As Amended April 16, 2026

Majority vote

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.

Major Provisions

- 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 one 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 or 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.

COMMENTS

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."

Arguments in Support

According to the *California Narcotics Officers' Association*, 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 unplatd 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 wobbler;
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."

Arguments in Opposition

According to the *San Francisco Public Defender*, "AB 1588 (Stefani) would implement draconian measures to take people's cars away – wildly increasing the fee individuals would face from \$1000 to tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars. A car, declared a "public nuisance" under the bill, could then be sold to another community member reaping huge profits for local governments at individuals' expense. Entire families rely on the sharing of one car. This means that fines associated with a car and having a car taken away have devastating consequences on an entire family."

"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 (OPD) 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."

"Under AB 1588 (Stefani), a police officer can obtain a warrant for the immediate seizure of a car based on "a video stream or recording from a reasonably reliable source." A video stream meeting this standard likely means automated license plate reader (ALPR) cameras and drones and could also mean Facebook videos or TikToks. To seize a vehicle, officers do not even need to be present to seize a vehicle and do not even need to watch the event live. They can go through videos on Monday morning and send out the tow trucks that afternoon.

"Rather than escalating ineffective punishments, California should focus on environmental and community-based prevention. Oakland's Department of Transportation has begun installing bollards, steel plates, and curb extensions to disrupt intersections commonly used for sideshows, and nearby residents have already reported a decrease in activity. Roadway design, youth engagement, and investment in community-based programming are evidence-based strategies that promote safety without exacerbating inequality and racial disparities in the criminal legal system."

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, "Cost pressures (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund) of an unknown but potentially significant amount to the courts to adjudicate criminal enforcement actions authorized by this bill. Actual costs will depend on the number of cases filed and the amount of court time needed to resolve each case. It generally costs approximately \$1,000 to operate a courtroom for one hour. Although courts are not funded on the basis of workload, increased pressure on the Trial Court Trust Fund may create a demand for increased funding for courts from the General Fund. The state budget provides an annual General Fund backfill to the Trial Court Trust Fund to offset ongoing declining revenue. This backfill was \$37.3 million in 2024-25.

"The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year beginning in the 2027-28 fiscal year."

VOTES**ASM PUBLIC SAFETY: 9-0-0**

YES: Schultz, Alanis, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Lackey, Nguyen, Ramos, Sharp-Collins

ASM TRANSPORTATION: 15-0-1

YES: Wilson, Davies, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Carrillo, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Jackson, Lackey, Macedo, Papan, Ransom, Rogers, Sharp-Collins

ABS, ABST OR NV: Ávila Farías

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Aguiar-Curry, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

VERSION: April 16, 2026

CONSULTANT: Ilan Zur / PUB. S. / (916) 319-3744

FN: 0002799