
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Senator Jesse Arreguín, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 1588 **Hearing Date:** June 30, 2026
Author: Stefani
Version: April 16, 2026
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: ML

Subject: *Vehicles: Sideshow Accountability and Community Safety Act*

HISTORY

Source: Daniel Lurie, Mayor of San Francisco; Streets are for Everyone

Prior Legislation: AB 1978 (Sanchez), Ch. 501, Stats. of 2024
AB 2186 (Wallis), Ch. 502, Stats. of 2024
AB 3085 (Gipson, Ch. 504, Stats. of 2024
AB 2546 (Nazarian), held in Senate Public Safety, 2022
AB 2000 (Gabriel), Ch. 436, Stats. of 2022
AB 1407 (Friedman), vetoed, 2019

Support: AAA Northern California, Nevada & Utah; Auto Club of Southern California; California Association of Highway Patrolmen; California City Transportation Initiative; California Contract Cities Association; California Police Chiefs Association; City and County of San Francisco; City of Beverly Hills; City of Fremont; City of Norwalk; City of Oakland; Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Opposition: ACLU California Action; Initiate Justice; Local 148 Los Angeles County Public Defender's Union; Sister Warriors Freedom Coalition

Assembly Floor Vote: 75 - 0

PURPOSE

The purpose of this bill is to establish new criminal penalties for engaging in an exhibition of speed, where the violation occurred as part of a sideshow, and to expand the definition of a sideshow.

Existing law 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. (Veh. Code, § 23109, subds. (a) & (b).)

Existing law defines “motor vehicle speed contest” to include a motor vehicle race against another vehicle, a clock, or other timing device. (Veh. Code, § 23109, subd. (a).)

Existing law 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. Code, § 23109, subd. (e)(1).)

Existing law 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. Code, § 23109, subd. (f)(1).)

Existing law 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. (Veh. Code, § 23109.1.)

Existing law 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 prior offense caused bodily injury to another person it is punishable by 30 days to six months in county jail; if the most recent prior offense caused 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. Code, § 23109, subd. (f)(1)-(4).)

Existing law 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. Code, § 23109, subd. (c).)

Existing law 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).)

Existing law 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. Code, § 23109, subd. (d).)

Existing law 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. Code, § 23109, subd. (i)(1).)

Existing law 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 sideshow, with the option for a restricted license at the court's discretion. (Veh. Code, § 23109, subd. (i)(2)(A)-(B).)

Existing law 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. Code, § 23109, subd. (i)(2)(A)(2).)

Existing law authorizes vehicle impound, including impoundment of a vehicle involved in a speed contest, exhibition of speed, or reckless driving. (Veh. Code, § 23109, subd. (h).)

Existing law 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. Code, § 22650, subd. (b).)

Existing law 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.)

Existing law 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. Code, § 22651.6.)

Existing law 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 1 day to 30 days. (Veh. Code, § 23109, subd. (h).)

Existing law 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. Code, § 23109.2, subd. (a).)

Existing law 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 to take the person into custody, the peace officer shall not be required to take the person into custody. (Veh. Code, § 23109.3.)

Existing law 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. Code, § 14602.7, subd. (a)(1).)

Existing law 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. Code, § 23103.)

Existing law 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. Code, § 23104, subd. (a).)

Existing law punishes reckless driving that proximately causes great bodily injury (GBI) 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. (Veh. Code, § 23104, subd. (a).)

Existing law 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. Code, § 23105.)

Existing law 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. Code, § 40303.)

This bill 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.

This bill 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 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 \$1,000.
- 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.

- 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 16 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.

This bill expands the definition of a “sideshow,” as follows:

- 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.
- Removes the requirement that the event is for the purpose of performing certain vehicle crimes for spectators.
- 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

1. Need for This Bill

The author writes:

Illegal sideshows have evolved into highly organized and dangerous events that threaten public safety, disrupt California's transportation system, and negatively impact communities throughout the state. These gatherings frequently involve coordinated efforts to block intersections, freeway ramps, and highways while drivers perform reckless stunts before large crowds. Despite recent legislative action, existing enforcement tools and penalties have not kept pace with increasingly sophisticated tactics, including the use of unregistered dirt bikes and social media coordination, as well as a growing number of repeat offenders. Sideshows and street takeovers have become the catalyst for shootings, looting, arson, and other serious crimes. AB 1588 strengthens California's response by closing enforcement gaps, increasing accountability for repeat offenders, and aligning sideshow penalties with existing street racing laws. By providing law enforcement with additional tools to address organized sideshow activity, this bill aims to improve public safety, protect transportation infrastructure, and enhance the quality of life for communities affected by these dangerous events.

2. Existing Law Governing Sideshows

Under existing law, a sideshow is 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. A sideshow is also known as a street takeover. (Veh. Code, § 23109, subd. (i)(2)(A)(2).) If a person engages in an exhibition of speed or aids or abets an exhibition of speed as part of a sideshow, a court, commencing January 1, 2029, may suspend the person's driving privileges for 90 days to six months, with the option for a restricted license at the court's discretion. (Veh. Code, § 23109, subd. (i)(2)(A)-(B).) There are no other existing penalties specifically for sideshows.

However, many existing criminal penalties cover the conduct at sideshows, including reckless driving, engaging in a speed contest, aiding or abetting a speed contest, engaging in an exhibition of speed, and aiding or abetting an exhibition of speed. (Veh. Code, §§ 23109, subds. (a)-(c); 23103.) These offenses are generally misdemeanors, with very similar penalties. Reckless driving is punishable by five to 90 days in county jail or a fine of \$145 to \$1,000, or by both. (Veh. Code, § 23103.) A speed contest occurs when a person races against another vehicle, a clock, or other timing device, and is punishable by 24 hours to 90 days in county jail, a fine of \$355 to \$1,000, or by both (Veh. Code, § 23109, subd. (e)(1).) An exhibition of speed means 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; 2 CALCRIM 2202 (2026).) An exhibition of speed, as well as the crimes of aiding and abetting a speed contest, aiding and abetting an exhibition of speed, or obstructing or placing a barricade or assisting or participating in placing a barricade for the purpose of facilitating or aiding or as an incident to a speed contest or exhibition of speed, are similarly misdemeanors punishable by up to 90 days in county jail, by a fine of up to \$500, or by both. (Veh. Code, § 23109, subd. (i)(1).)

Existing law establishes heightened penalties for reckless driving and speed contests that result in injury, or where the person is a repeat offender. A speed contest or reckless driving that causes bodily injury is still a misdemeanor, but is punishable with higher fines and jail time of 30 days to six months in county jail and up to a \$1,000 fine, or by both. (Veh. Code, §§ 23109, subd. (f)(1); 23104, subd. (a).) If the speed contest or reckless driving proximately causes specified serious bodily injuries to another person, including loss of consciousness, a concussion, or a bone fracture, the offense becomes a wobbler. (Veh. Code, §§ 23109.1; 23105.) Similarly, reckless driving that proximately causes these injuries to another, where the person has a prior conviction for reckless driving, a speed contest, an exhibition of speed, driving under the influence (DUI), or DUI causing bodily injury, as specified, is also a wobbler. (Veh. Code, § 23104, subd. (a).) Finally, heightened punishments apply to persons convicted of multiple speed contests within five years. A second speed contest conviction within five years is a misdemeanor punishable by four days to six months in county jail. (Veh. Code, § 23109, subd. (f)(1).) However, if the most recent prior offense caused bodily injury, the second offense is punishable by 30 days to six months in county jail, and if the most recent prior offense caused serious bodily injury, as defined, the second offense is a wobbler. (Veh. Code, § 23109, subd. (f)(2)-(4).)

3. Effect of This Bill

First, this bill establishes new penalties for 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. This bill makes the penalties for an exhibition of speed as part of a

sideshow match existing penalties for speed contests. In particular, it makes a conviction for engaging in an exhibition of speed as part of a sideshow 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. If the driver proximately causes bodily injury, the conviction is punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for 30 days to six months and a fine of \$500 to \$1,000, or by both. If the driver proximately causes specified injuries, including loss of consciousness, a concussion, a bone fracture, or a wound requiring extensive suturing, the conviction is punishable as a wobbler. A second conviction for engaging in an exhibition of speed as part of a sideshow, within five years, is punishable by four days to six months in county jail, and a fine of \$500 to \$1,000. If the perpetration of the most recent prior offense within the five-year period proximately caused bodily injury, the second conviction is punishable by 30 days to six months, and a fine of \$500 to \$1,000. Finally, if the perpetration of the most recent prior offense within the five-year period proximately caused serious bodily injury, as defined, the second conviction is punishable as a state prison-eligible wobbler.

Second, this bill states 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. This same impoundment authority already exists for a person convicted of engaging in a speed contest. (Veh. Code, § 23109, subd. (h).)

Third, this bill expands the definition of a sideshow. This bill specifies that a sideshow is 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 certain vehicle crimes. It also removes the requirement that the sideshow must be for the purpose of performing certain vehicle crimes for spectators. Given that sideshows often attract significant numbers of spectators and the crime of an exhibition of speed specifically requires that the driving is intended to show off or make an impression on another,¹ the need to remove the requirement that the event be for spectators is somewhat unclear. The bill additionally specifies that a sideshow may involve the use or operation of motorcycles or off-highway motor vehicles, regardless of whether or not those vehicles display license plates or are registered. California law defines “motor vehicle” to mean a vehicle that is self-propelled. (Veh. Code, § 415.) This includes motorcycles. (Veh. Code, § 415.)

4. Argument in Support

The City and County of San Francisco writes:

Illegal sideshows and street takeovers have become an increasingly dangerous public safety concern in San Francisco and throughout the state. Beyond significant traffic safety risks, these events often involve additional criminal actions such as reckless driving, assaults, vandalism and obstruction of emergency responders. San Francisco residents have consistently expressed their concerns and frustrations over the occurrences of these events and their impacts on their quality of life.

¹ See CALCRIM 2202 (2026) (defining “exhibition of speed” to mean 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.)

AB 1588 closes gaps in current law by addressing vehicle types commonly used in sideshows, including motorcycles and dirt bikes. The bill aligns sideshow-related offenses with existing law governing exhibition of speed and speed contests, including stronger penalties for repeat offenders. It also authorizes vehicle impoundment upon conviction in specified cases and updates the definition of a sideshow to better reflect how these events occur in practice.

AB 1588 represents a targeted and practical step toward improving public safety to better address the issue of sideshows, street takeovers and street racing.

5. Argument in Opposition

ACLU California Action writes:

Based on evidence, this proposal 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 of sideshows. While Oakland increased its fines in 2023, sideshows in Oakland are still prevalent. In 2024, the Oakland Police Department (OPD) stated that crimes, such as sideshow incidents, had actually increased, and this year hundreds of spectators still gathered at sideshows.

Moreover, 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.”

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.”

-- END --