
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 1588 (Stefani) - Vehicles: Sideshow Accountability and Community Safety Act

Version: April 16, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 3, 2026

Policy Vote: TRANS. 13 - 0, PUB. S. 6 - 0

Mandate: Yes

Consultant: Mark McKenzie

Bill Summary: AB 1588 would expand the definition of a “sideshow” and increase the penalties for engaging in an exhibition of speed as part of a sideshow, as specified.

Fiscal Impact:

- Court impacts: Unknown court cost pressures to adjudicate additional criminal enforcement actions authorized by this bill. Actual costs would depend on the number of additional cases related to violations for engaging in an exhibition of speed as part of a sideshow and the amount of court time needed to resolve each case. Staff notes that it generally costs about \$10,500 to operate a courtroom for one eight-hour day. Although courts are not funded on the basis of workload, increased staff time and resources may create a need for additional support from the General Fund to support court operations. The 2026-27 Budget appropriated \$70 million from the General Fund to backfill the current fund imbalance in the Trial Court Trust Fund and help pay for court operations. (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund)
- State prison: Potential increase in incarceration costs (General Fund) for new commitments to state prison for persons convicted of engaging in an exhibition of speed as part of a sideshow for a second or subsequent time within 5 years of a prior conviction and proximately causing serious bodily injury. To the extent that the provisions of this measure lead to additional commitments to state prison, it would result in additional General Fund costs of approximately \$138,000 for each year of sentencing imposed on violators.
- County jail: Potential increase in local incarceration costs (local funds) to the extent persons would be convicted of a crime created by this bill and sentenced to county jail time. The punishment for crimes specified in this bill range from optional jail time of 30 days to six months, to mandatory jail sentences ranging from four days to 16 months or two or three years, depending on the violation. The annual cost to incarcerate one person in county jail varies by county but can range from \$70,000 to \$90,000 per year. County incarceration costs are not subject to reimbursement by the state, but overcrowding in county jails creates cost pressure on the General Fund because the state has historically granted new funding to counties to offset overcrowding resulting from public safety realignment. (local funds, General Fund)

Background: Existing law makes it a crime for a person to engage in a “motor vehicle speed contest” on a highway or off-street parking facility, and provides for a punishment of between 24 hours and 90 days imprisonment in a county jail and/or a fine of between \$355 and \$1,000, and 40 hours of community service. If the violation proximately causes bodily injury to another person, punishment would be imprisonment in a county

jail for 30 days to 6 months and/or a fine of between \$500 and \$1,000. However, if the injuries are serious (loss of consciousness, a concussion, bone fracture, or requiring extensive suturing), the violation is punishable as a “wobbler,” with penalties of imprisonment in state prison or a county jail for a period of 30 days to one year, a fine of \$500 to \$1,000, or both. The court may also order a driver’s license suspension of 90 days to six months for these violations, or restrict driving privileges to necessary travel to and from a place of employment.

Existing law provides for various enhanced penalties for a second violation of engaging in a speed contest within five years, the severity of which depends upon whether or not the violation results in bodily injury to someone other than the driver, as specified. A second violation that results in serious bodily injury (including a loss of consciousness, concussion, bone fracture, loss or impairment of function of any bodily organ, a wound requiring extensive suturing, and serious disfigurement) is punishable as an alternate felony/misdemeanor (wobbler), with mandatory imprisonment in a state prison or county jail for not less than 30 days or more than 1 year, and a fine of not less than \$500 nor more than \$1,000. The court must order a six-month driver’s license suspension or specified driving restriction for these repeat violations.

Existing law defines an “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. Existing law makes it a crime for a person to engage in an exhibition of speed on a highway or off-street parking facility, and provides for a punishment by imprisonment of up to 90 days and/or a fine of up to \$500. Additionally, existing law authorizes a peace officer to immediately arrest a person and seize his or her motor vehicle and impound it for up to 30 days, at the registered owner’s expense and as specified, if the officer determines that the person used the vehicle to engage in a speed contest, reckless driving on a highway or in an off-street parking facility, or an exhibition of speed on a highway or in an off-street parking facility. Existing law, beginning on July 1, 2029, authorizes the court to order a driver’s license suspension of 90 days to six months for a person who engages in an exhibition of speed as part of a “sideshow,” in addition to other applicable penalties, as specified.

Existing law defines a “sideshow” as 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.

Proposed Law: AB 1588 would expand and clarify the definition of a sideshow and impose enhanced penalties for engaging in an exhibition of speed as part of a sideshow. Specifically, this bill would:

- Expand the definition of “sideshow” as follows to add the underlined provisions:
 - A “sideshow” is defined as an event or gathering in which two or more persons barricade, block, impede, or otherwise obstruct traffic upon or access to a highway or in an offstreet 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, for spectators. 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.

- Specify that a person convicted of engaging in an exhibition of speed on a highway or in an off-street parking facility where the violation occurred as part of a sideshow is subject to the following punishments:
 - A conviction is punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for at least 24 hours but not more than 90 days, or by a fine of \$355 to \$1,000, or both.
 - 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 30 days to six months, or by a fine of \$500 to \$1,000, or both.
 - 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 in a county jail for 16 months, or two or three years, or by imprisonment in a county jail for 30 days to six months, or by a fine of 500 to \$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 conviction of 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 \$500 to \$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 30 days to six months, and by a fine of \$500 to \$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 or in a county jail for 30 days to one year, and by a fine of \$500 to \$1,000 (a state prison-eligible wobbler).
- Authorize a vehicle to be impounded at the registered owner's expense for up to 30 days if a person convicted of a violation of engaging in an exhibition of speed on a highway or in an off-street parking facility, where the violation occurred as part of a sideshow, and the vehicle used in the violation is registered to that person.

Related Legislation: AB 3 (Fong), Chap. 611/2021, authorized the court to order a driver's license suspension of 90 days to six months for a person who engages in an exhibition of speed as part of a "sideshow," in addition to other applicable penalties. The January 1, 2025 implementation date was pushed to 2029 in later legislation.

Staff Comments: This bill is intended to enhance enforcement related to participation in a sideshow and improve public safety. Specifically, the bill creates enhanced and new criminal penalties for engaging in an "exhibition of speed" that takes place as part of a sideshow event or gathering. The bill generally aligns the penalty structure for engaging in an exhibition of speed as part of a sideshow to existing penalties imposed for engaging in a motor vehicle speed contest, as specified.

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