
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 1588
Author: Stefani (D), et al.
Amended: 8/21/26 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE: 13-0, 6/23/26
AYES: Cortese, Strickland, Archuleta, Arreguín, Blakespear, Dahle, Gonzalez, Grayson, Menjivar, Richardson, Seyarto, Valladares, Wiener

SENATE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE: 6-0, 6/30/26
AYES: Arreguín, Seyarto, Caballero, Cortese, Pérez, Wiener

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/13/26
AYES: Cervantes, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 75-0, 5/26/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Vehicles: Sideshow Accountability and Community Safety Act

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill 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.

Senate Floor Amendments of 8/21/26 resolve chaptering out conflicts with AB 1830 (Petrie-Norris, 2026) and add a coauthor.

ANALYSIS:

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 (VEH) § 23109)

- 2) Defines “motor vehicle speed contest” to include a motor vehicle race against another vehicle, a clock, or other timing device. (VEH § 23109)
- 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)
 - 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)
 - c) Punishes a person convicted of engaging in a speed contest that proximately causes specified injuries, 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 § 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)
- 4) 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).)

- 5) 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)
- 6) 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)
- 7) 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 § 23109)
- 8) 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)
- 9) 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)
 - 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 §§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)
- 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)
- 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)

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 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, 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 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 not less than \$500 nor more than \$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 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.
- 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.
- 4) Incorporates changes proposed by AB 1830 to be operative only if this bill and AB 1830 are enacted and this bill is enacted last.

Comments

- 1) *Purpose of the bill.* According to the author, “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) *Sideshows and exhibitions of speed.* Sideshows are illegal street activities in which people block or impede traffic to perform vehicle stunts, street racing, exhibitions of speed, or reckless driving, for spectators. These events, where people race vehicles and shut down streets, can cause crashes and spectator injuries and can block roadways and disrupt traffic flow, including access for

emergency vehicles. An exhibition of speed is when a driver accelerates or drives at a dangerous speed to show off or make an impression on someone else. It does not include street racing, which is known as a motor vehicle speed contest.

- 3) *A new definition of sideshow.* This bill revises the definition of “sideshow” in an effort to close loopholes identified by law enforcement. Among other changes, the bill adds motorcycles and off-highway vehicles (such as dirt bikes) to the definition of sideshow, as the involvement of these types of vehicles has become more common. It is not clear, however, that this is actually a loophole in current law, as motorcycle and dirt bike riders can currently be charged for their participation in a sideshow. Earlier this year, Bay Area law enforcement agencies arrested nine people and impounded 77 all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and dirt bikes after a sideshow and street takeover on the Bay Bridge.

Additionally, this bill creates more flexibility in the definition of sideshow, which may result in some activities that did not previously rise to the definition of sideshow now being classified as a sideshow. For example, this bill removes the requirement that a sideshow have “spectators,” as frequently the only people participating in these events are the drivers themselves.

- 4) *This bill imposes penalties for exhibitions of speed at sideshows.* AB 1588 creates a new penalty structure for an exhibition of speed as part of a sideshow. This means that a driver would have had to accelerate or drive at an unsafe rate of speed in order to show off to someone else while they were part of a sideshow. Currently, an offense of this nature would likely be prosecuted as reckless driving. The bill aligns the new penalties with those imposed for motor vehicle speed contests—also known as street racing. The escalating penalties begin with one to 90 days in county jail and grow based on severity and recurrence. Drivers that cause serious injuries or commit repeat offenses can be charged with wobblers, meaning either a misdemeanor or a felony. Lastly, the bill authorizes vehicles used in sideshows to be impounded for up to 30 days.

Related/Prior Legislation

AB 1978 (Sanchez, Chapter 501, Statutes of 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) – Authorized a peace officer to removal and seize a motor vehicle used in an exhibition of speed in an offstreet parking facility for no more than 30 days and provides that a peace officer may not remove and seize a vehicle of a person who aided and abetted a person engaged in an exhibition of speed.

AB 3085 (Gipson, Chapter 504, Statutes of 2024) – Expanded the list of offenses for which a peace officer may impound a vehicle pursuant to a warrant or order issued by a magistrate.

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 off-street parking facility or an exhibition of speed in an off-street parking facility, or to aid or abet therein.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, Fiscal impacts include:

- 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)

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/20/26)

Mayor Daniel Lurie, City and County of San Francisco (source)

AAA Northern California, Nevada & Utah

Active San Gabriel Valley

Alameda; City of

Auto Club of Southern California

Beverly Hills; City of

Bike LA

Bike Oven

California Association of Highway Patrolmen

California City Transportation Initiative

California Contract Cities Association

California District Attorneys Association

California Police Chiefs Association

City and County of San Francisco

City of Fremont

City of Norwalk

City of Sunnyvale

Conor Lynch Foundation

League of California Cities

Long Beach Gray Panthers

Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Los Angeles Walks

Move Santa Barbara County

Norwalk; City of

Oakland; City of

San Francisco Bay Area Families for Safe Streets

San Francisco Police Department

So Cal Cycling

Socalcycling.com

Stop4aidan

Street Racing Kills
Streets are for Everyone
Walk San Francisco

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/20/26)

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

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: According to the California Police Chiefs Association, “AB 1588 provides law enforcement with important tools to address this growing public safety threat. The bill closes existing enforcement gaps by expressly prohibiting participation in, aiding, or abetting a sideshow, expands the statutory definition of a sideshow to reflect modern tactics used by organizers, including the use of motorcycles and off-highway vehicles to block and obstruct roadways, and strengthens penalties for repeat offenders. The bill also authorizes courts to treat vehicles used as performing vehicles in sideshows as public nuisances subject to forfeiture following conviction and permits vehicle seizure warrants to be supported by video evidence from reasonably reliable sources.”

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION: According to Initiate Justice, “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.

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 75-0, 5/26/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Fariás, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel,

Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle
Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins,
Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson,
Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Bryan, Elhawary, Kalra, Muratsuchi, Celeste Rodriguez

Prepared by: Isabelle LaSalle / TRANS. / (916) 651-4121
8/24/26 11:37:39

**** **END** ****