

Date of Hearing: May 13, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1605 (Ransom) – As Amended April 28, 2026

|                   |                           |       |        |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-------|--------|
| Policy Committee: | Public Safety             | Vote: | 8 - 0  |
|                   | Governmental Organization |       | 19 - 0 |

Urgency: No                      State Mandated Local Program: Yes                      Reimbursable: Yes

**SUMMARY:**

This bill authorizes a court, beginning January 1, 2028, to prohibit a person convicted of specified high-end impaired driving offenses who is granted probation from purchasing alcohol as a term and condition of probation.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to issue an identification card or driver’s license bearing a “NO ALCOHOL SALES” designation to a covered individual upon application.
- 2) Requires every person who sells, furnishes, or gives away an alcoholic beverage to request and review identification.
- 3) Prohibits the sale or furnishing of alcohol to a person presenting a “NO ALCOHOL SALES”–designated identification.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

- 1) Cost pressures (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund) of an unknown but likely minor amount to the trial courts to transmit abstracts to the DMV, document the forfeiture or surrender of physical licenses to law enforcement, and process fee payment plans for individuals below 200% of the federal poverty level. Although courts are not funded on the basis of workload, increased pressure on the Trial Court Trust Fund may create a need for increased funding for courts from the General Fund.
- 2) Potentially reimbursable state-mandated local program costs (General Fund) to local law enforcement agencies of an unknown but likely minor amount to receive and dispose of forfeited or surrendered driver’s licenses and identification cards, depending on the Commission on State Mandates’ determination of any reimbursable mandate.
- 3) Costs (Alcohol Beverage Control Fund) of approximately \$497,000 in the first year and \$464,000 ongoing to the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) for new staffing — one attorney (\$276,492 first year / \$266,492 ongoing) and one agent (\$220,706 first year / \$197,706 ongoing) — to implement and oversee the new universal identification-check standard. ABC reports it would pursue a Budget Change Proposal for the new positions.

- 4) Implementation would require DMV to promulgate regulations, modify its DL/ID card vendor contract to redesign the face of the DL/ID card to add the “NO ALCOHOL SALES” designation, and make modifications to its core legacy systems to issue qualifying licenses and identification cards based on court abstracts (Motor Vehicle Account, General Fund). The DMV has not reported a cost associated with making these modifications, but reports that it cannot complete the required programming and regulatory effort by the January 1, 2028, operative date.

According to the DMV, its core systems technology has reached its outer limits. Any change to, or expansion of, functionality jeopardizes continuity of services, systems, data integrity, and costs. The DMV has instituted a containment strategy designed to limit changes to the legacy system or risk catastrophic system failure.

The DMV is undertaking an Enterprise Modernization Project – the Digital eXperience Platform Project (DXP), and resources are fully committed to the project. Coordinating implementation of this bill within DXP might delay bill implementation and increase DXP Platform costs. Most changes to the DMV’s services will have to be built outside the core legacy system. If the DMV is to implement this bill by January 1, 2028, it reports that it will be required to build a temporary solution outside of the core legacy system. Programming outside the core legacy system will be costly, redundant, and will require the department to acquire new technology and services. Acquiring new technology and services will require approval by the Department of Finance.

The bill contains no cost recovery for implementation efforts. The Motor Vehicle Account, the primary funding account for the California Highway Patrol and the department, is facing insolvency. In a report, the LAO noted that, “Until a plan is put in place to address MVA's structural deficit, we recommend the Legislature set a high bar for considering approval of any proposals that create additional MVA cost pressures and accelerate the risk of insolvency.”

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.

#### COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

Driving under the influence is not a mistake, it is a reckless and dangerous crime that puts everyone on our roads at risk... AB 1605 gives judges a common-sense tool to help break that cycle by allowing them to place a 'No Alcohol Sale' designation on the licenses of repeat and serious DUI offenders, preventing them from purchasing alcohol... AB 1605 is a targeted measure that focuses on prevention and accountability by limiting alcohol access for individuals who have demonstrated they cannot use it responsibly, helping reduce repeat offenses and save lives.

- 2) **Background.** California’s DUI framework imposes graduated penalties tied to the offense and number of prior convictions, escalating from misdemeanor first-offense DUI to felony fourth-offense DUI, felony DUI causing bodily injury with prior convictions, and felony

gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated. According to the California Office of Traffic Safety, 1,355 people were killed in alcohol-involved crashes in California in 2023, accounting for roughly one-third of all traffic deaths. The DMV reports 110,017 DUI arrests in 2021. This bill creates a new, discretionary tool for courts at the high end of the DUI severity spectrum: courts may, but are not required to, prohibit a person granted probation from purchasing alcohol for up to the entire probationary period, applicable only to fourth-offense DUI (or DUI with specified felony priors), DUI causing bodily injury with two or more priors (or with specified felony priors), and gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated. To enforce the prohibition, the DMV would issue identification bearing a “NO ALCOHOL SALES” designation upon application, and licensees would be required to refuse sale to a person presenting such identification. Violations of the new identification-checking and no-sale provisions are expressly not crimes.

The Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control reports that the bill fundamentally changes the requirements for any alcohol transaction. Existing law prohibits sales to persons under 21 but does not require an identification check on every transaction; businesses commonly use age-based discretionary policies, such as requesting identification only from purchasers who appear under 25 or 30. The bill would require an identification check on every alcohol transaction, regardless of the apparent age of the purchaser.

The bill raises several practical concerns identified by the policy committees and opposition. As drafted, the universal identification-check requirement reaches any person who sells, furnishes, or gives away an alcoholic beverage, which would technically apply to informal social settings. The bill also does not specify how an individual subject to a court order would apply for the “NO ALCOHOL SALES” license or how the forfeiture or surrender of physical licenses to law enforcement would be handled. The opposition additionally notes that the visible “NO ALCOHOL SALES” designation on a driver’s license — routinely required for employment, housing, and financial transactions — would extend beyond the scope of the probation condition.

**Analysis Prepared by:** Shiran Zohar / APPR. / (916) 319-2081