CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS
AB 1954 (Ward)
As Amended August 4, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

This bill prohibits unauthorized third-party platforms from listing, selling, or reselling tee times at publicly owned golf courses unless they have the golf course operator's written permission, while still allowing golfers to transfer a reservation at cost if the golf course operator does not have a cancellation policy posted on the website where the reservation was made.

Senate Amendments
Senate amendments clarify that if a golf course operator does not clearly post their cancellation policy on the internet website where the reservation is secured, an individual who paid for a golf course reservation may sell or transfer the golf course reservation for no more than the total amount that the individual paid to acquire the reservation.

COMMENTS

Background. California has long prohibited unfair business practices and misleading advertising through the Unfair Competition Law and the False Advertising Law. The UCL is intentionally broad and serves as the state's principal civil enforcement mechanism against unlawful, unfair, and fraudulent business practices. Likewise, the False Advertising Law prohibits businesses from making misleading representations about goods or services offered to consumers.

As online reservation platforms have expanded, questions have arisen about secondary resale of reservations for public and consumer-facing services. Similar concerns have arisen in connection with ticket sales, restaurant reservations, campground reservations, and municipal golf tee times, raising questions about consumer access to limited public resources and the use of automated technologies to obtain reservations for resale. Municipal golf courses are intended to provide affordable public recreational opportunities through reservation systems that allow golfers to book tee times directly with the course. According to the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, however, unauthorized "tee time brokering" has become an increasing challenge at Los Angeles municipal golf courses. The Department explains that brokers reserve publicly available tee times as soon as they are released and advertise those reservations for resale, later canceling and rebooking the reservation in the purchaser's name.

Public reporting has documented the practical effects of these practices on consumers. According to the Los Angeles Times, golfers reported that desirable weekend tee times at popular municipal courses often disappeared within seconds of becoming available, with some subsequently being offered for resale online for additional fees. In response, the City of Los Angeles implemented a pilot reservation deposit program intended to discourage speculative reservations. The City later reported that reservations that were booked and subsequently canceled declined by nearly 95% during the program's first six months, and golfers reported improved access to tee times.

A 2025 article in Golfweek highlighted that "Between 2021 and 2023, the Kim brothers operated a golf tee time brokering business in which they reserved golf tee times online, including at public golf courses, and resold them to members of the public for a fee, frequently in violation of municipal regulations. The brothers marketed, solicited, and communicated with their customers through various social medial platforms, including KakaoTalk, an instant messaging application. As part of their business, the brothers reserved thousands of tee times for resale at numerous golf courses nationwide, including at least 17 different public courses across Southern California. The brothers created a monopoly of Los Angeles and Orange County area golf course tee times by securing the most sought-after early morning slots, often within seconds of their release to the public. As a result, the brothers made it more difficult and more expensive for members of the public to reserve tee times at these courses without paying them an additional booking fee, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic."

AB 1954 would establish that the unauthorized resale or brokering of reservations at municipally owned golf courses constitutes an unlawful business practice enforceable under California's existing consumer protection laws. As a result, businesses that facilitate or profit from unauthorized reservation brokering could be subject to the remedies available under the UCL, including injunctive relief, restitution, and civil penalties in actions brought by authorized public prosecutors. The bill does not prohibit municipally owned golf courses from contracting with authorized reservation vendors or technology providers. Rather, it seeks to prohibit the unauthorized commercial resale of tee times made available through public reservation systems.

According to the Author
"Golf is an incredibly popular sport in California, and its courses attract tourist from all around the world. This legislation is necessary to prevent bad actors from taking advantage of reservations systems for personal gain, as well as taking opportunities from local residents whose taxpayer dollars go towards the upkeep and maintenance of those public and municipal facilities."

Arguments in Support

According to a coalition of golf associations, including the sponsor of the bill, the Californian Alliance for Golf, in support, "AB 1954 would give the state's cities, counties, charter cities, and the state itself a tool in the form of a civil remedy that they would have to initiate of their own volition and at their own expense to restrain 3rd party brokering that is not performed by consent (written agreement) of the parties. This is a tool that they do not now have and one that only the state can provide.

"To be clear; it's important to emphasize that this bill does not in any way affect agreements that are freely entered into for ostensible mutual benefit. It only affects brokering without the consent of the public agency that owns the golf course or the management group that the public agency has put under contract to operate its golf course. There are many well-known and popular vendors in that space. They operate by written agreements that bring benefit to both municipality and vendor, not to mention golfers, and would not be affected by AB 1954."

Arguments in Opposition
None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

This bill was keyed fiscal by Legislative Counsel. According to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations, the bill will result in costs of an unknown but potentially significant amount to the Department of Justice to bring enforcement actions as authorized by this bill and ongoing cost pressures of an unknown but potentially significant amount to the courts in additional workload resulting from adding an activity to UCL. 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 bill left the Senate Appropriations Committee pursuant to Senate Rule 28.8, indicating a very small or insignificant state financial impact.

VOTES:

ASM ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS, AND TOURISM: 8-0-1
YES: Ward, Lackey, Elhawary, Jeff Gonzalez, McKinnor, Ortega, Valencia, Zbur
ABS, ABST OR NV: Quirk-Silva

ASM PRIVACY AND CONSUMER PROTECTION: 15-0-0
YES: Bauer-Kahan, Macedo, Aguiar-Curry, Bryan, DeMaio, Hoover, Irwin, Lowenthal, McKinnor, Ortega, Patterson, Petrie-Norris, Ward, Wicks, Wilson

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0
YES: Wicks, Hoover, Aguiar-Curry, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 70-0-10
YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Castillo, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Zbur, Rivas
ABS, ABST OR NV: Arambula, Carrillo, Chen, Flora, Garcia, Hoover, Lackey, Ramos, Celeste Rodriguez, Wilson

UPDATED

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