

Date of Hearing: June 23, 2026

Counsel: Ilan Zur

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Nick Schultz, Chair

SB 1198 (Menjivar) – As Amended May 14, 2026

As Proposed to be Amended in Committee

SUMMARY: Increases the length of court-imposed license suspensions for reckless driving convictions and modifies the procedures that apply to a vehicle impounded for reckless driving following a peace officer arrest, as specified. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Increases the length of license suspensions that a court may impose upon a person convicted of reckless driving, commencing January 1, 2028, except where a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) license revocation is mandatory, as follows:
 - a) Upon a first conviction, from a period of up to 30 days to a period of up to 60 days.
 - b) Upon a second conviction, from a period of up to 60 days to a period of 30 days to six months.
 - c) Upon a third or subsequent conviction, from a period of up to six months to a period of 90 days to one year, and requires, rather than permits, a court to impose a license suspension for a third or subsequent conviction, unless a DMV license revocation is mandatory.
- 2) Strikes the crime of reckless driving from the list of crimes, a violation of which authorizes a peace officer to immediately arrest and take that person into custody, and remove and seize the vehicle used in the offense, to be impounded for up to 30 days.
- 3) Establishes a standalone impoundment statute specific to reckless driving that provides that when a peace officer determines a person was engaged in reckless driving, the officer may immediately arrest and take into custody that person and cause the removal and seizure of the vehicle used in that offense, to be impounded for not more than 30 days.
- 4) Modifies the procedures governing a vehicle impounded for reckless driving pursuant to the above authority, as follows:
 - a) Requires an impounding agency to release a vehicle to the registered owner before the conclusion of the impoundment period if the person alleged to have been engaged in reckless driving was not authorized by the registered owner to operate the vehicle at the time of the offense, and requires the owner to provide evidence that the person did not have authorization to operate the vehicle, including, but not limited to, theft reports, documented history of unauthorized use, or communication denying use of the vehicle.

- b) Requires the following, for the purpose of the existing requirement that an impounding agency release a vehicle to the registered owner before the conclusion of the impoundment period if the registered owner of the vehicle was neither the driver nor passenger of the vehicle at the time of the alleged reckless driving violation or was unaware that the driver was using a vehicle to engage in reckless driving:
 - i) The owner shall submit a written, signed statement attesting that the registered owner was unaware that the driver was using the vehicle to engage in reckless driving.
 - ii) States that this relief shall only be available to a registered owner of a vehicle three times, and prohibits a registered owner from using this relief for a fourth or any subsequent arrest for reckless driving that involves the same driver and vehicle.
- c) Requires, similar to the impoundment procedure for a speed contest, that if an impounding agency releases a vehicle to the registered owner before the conclusion of the applicable impoundment period because a citation or notice is dismissed, criminal charges are not filed because of insufficient evidence, or the charges are otherwise dismissed prior to the conclusion of the impoundment period, neither the person charged with reckless driving nor the registered owner of the vehicle is responsible for towing and storage charges nor shall the vehicle be sold to satisfy those charges.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes criminal penalties for reckless driving, as follows:
 - a) 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, punishable as a misdemeanor, by five to 90 days in jail or a fine of \$145 to \$1,000, or by both. (Veh. Code, § 23103.)
 - b) Makes reckless driving proximately causing bodily injury to another a misdemeanor, punishable 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).)
 - c) Makes reckless driving that proximately causes great bodily injury, where the defendant has previously been convicted of reckless driving or DUI, among other crimes, an alternate felony-misdemeanor (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. (b).)
 - d) Makes reckless driving that proximately causes specified injuries 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.)
- 2) Authorizes discretionary court-imposed license suspensions for reckless driving:
 - a) Provides that when a driver is convicted of a violation of the Vehicle Code relating to the speed of vehicles or reckless driving, the court may, unless the Vehicle Code mandates a license revocation by the DMV, impose a license suspension not to exceed 30 days upon

- a first conviction, not to exceed 60 days upon a second conviction, and not to exceed six months upon a third or subsequent conviction. (Veh. Code, § 13200.)
- b) Authorizes a court to impose up to a six-month license suspension for a person convicted of reckless driving causing bodily injury. (Veh. Code, § 13201, subd. (b).)
- 3) Establishes DMV-imposed license suspensions for reckless driving:
- a) Authorizes the DMV to impose a license suspension for up to six months, as specified, at the discretion of the DMV, upon a person's second or subsequent conviction of reckless driving, among other offenses. (Veh. Code, §§ 13361, subd. (b); 13556, subd. (a).)
- b) Requires the DMV to impose a one-year license revocation upon a person's conviction for reckless driving causing bodily injury or a felony involving a motor vehicle, as specified. (Veh. Code, § 13350, subds. (a)(2)-(3) & (c).)
- c) Requires the DMV to impose a three-year license revocation upon a person's conviction for three or more violations for reckless driving, reckless driving causing bodily injury, reckless driving causing specified injuries, or a hit and run, within a period of 12 months from the first offense to the third or subsequent offense, or a combination of three or more convictions within the same period. (Veh. Code, § 13351, subds. (a)(2) & (b).)
- 4) Authorizes vehicle impoundment for reckless driving, as follows:
- a) Requires a magistrate presented with a peace officer affidavit establishing reasonable cause that a vehicle was an instrumentality used in the officer's presence in violation of specified crimes, including reckless driving, a speed contest, or an exhibition of speed, to issue a warrant authorizing an officer to immediately seize and remove the vehicle, to be impounded for up to 30 days. (Veh. Code, § 14602.7, subd. (a)(1).)
- b) Authorizes a peace officer who determines that a person engaged in reckless driving, a speed contest, or 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, to be impounded for up to 30 days, subject to the following:
- i) Requires that when such an impoundment occurs, the registered and legal owner of the vehicle or their agents be provided the opportunity for a storage hearing to determine the validity of the storage. (Veh. Code, § 23109.2, subds. (a) & (b).)
- ii) Sets forth the circumstances under which an impounding agency must release a vehicle to the registered owner prior to the conclusion of the impoundment period, as well as the conditions that must be met for a vehicle to be released to the legal owner on or before the 30th day of impoundment. (Veh. Code, § 23109.2, subds. (c) & (d).)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Sponsor:** Burbank Armenian Association
- 2) **Author's Statement:** According to the author, “For too long, reckless drivers have plagued California roads, claiming the lives of our beloved community members. Last year alone, nearly half of all collisions resulting in serious injury or death involved reckless driving. We must stand with the families whose lives have been forever changed by this inexcusable behavior. Standing with them means ensuring that reckless behavior behind the wheel is met with consequences serious enough to match the harm it causes. By increasing penalties for those who repeatedly engage in reckless driving, SB 1198 sends a clear message about the seriousness and the consequences of endangering oneself, pedestrians, bicyclists, and all other road users.”
- 3) **Reckless Driving:** Reckless driving is driving on a highway or off-street parking facility in willful or wanton disregard for the safety of persons or property. (Veh. Code, § 23103.) A person acts with wanton disregard for safety if the person is aware that their actions present a substantial and unjustified risk of harm and they intentionally ignore that risk. (CALCRIM No. 2200 (2026).) There is no requirement that the person intend to cause damage. (*Ibid.*)

Reckless driving is generally a misdemeanor, punishable by five to 90 days in county jail, a fine of \$145 to \$1,000, or by both. (Veh. Code, § 23103.) Heightened penalties apply to certain types of conduct, to repeat offenders, and to offenses involving injury. Reckless driving proximately causing bodily injury is a misdemeanor but is subject to elevated penalties of 30 days to six months in jail or a fine of \$220 to \$1,000. (Veh. Code, § 23104, subd. (a).) If the person engaged in reckless driving with intent to capture a visual image or sound recording for a commercial purpose, the offense is punishable by up to six months in county jail. (Veh. Code, § 40008, subd. (a).) If the reckless driving offense causes certain injuries, such as a concussion, loss of consciousness, or a bone fracture, it is punishable as a wobbler. (Veh. Code, § 23105.) Reckless driving that causes great bodily injury to another, if the person has previously been convicted of reckless driving or DUI, among other offenses, is also a wobbler. (Veh. Code, § 23104, subd. (b).)

- 4) **Effect of this Bill:** This bill contains two primary provisions; one relating to court-imposed license suspensions for reckless driving and the other relating to impoundments for reckless driving following a peace officer arrest.

a) Court-Imposed License Suspensions for Reckless Driving

Existing law authorizes both the courts and the DMV to impose a license suspension following a reckless driving conviction. Court-imposed suspensions for reckless driving are discretionary. The Vehicle Code prohibits a court from imposing a discretionary license suspension for reckless driving if the offense requires the DMV to impose a mandatory license revocation. (Veh. Code, § 13200.) The purpose of this provision is likely to avoid imposing duplicative license sanctions by both the courts and the DMV. For example, if a person was convicted of their third reckless driving conviction within 12 months, existing law prohibits a court from suspending that person’s license because the DMV is already required to impose a three-year license revocation. (Veh. Code, § 13351, subds. (a)(2) & (c).)

For a first-time conviction for reckless driving, the court may impose up to a one-month suspension. (Veh. Code, § 13200.) If the first-time conviction causes bodily injury, the court may impose up to a six-month suspension. (Veh. Code, § 13201, subd. (b).) More impactfully, a conviction for reckless driving causing bodily injury requires the DMV to impose a mandatory one-year license revocation. (Veh. Code, § 13350, subs. (a)(2) & (c).) If a person is convicted of their second reckless driving offense, the court may impose up to a two-month suspension, and for a third or subsequent conviction, the court may impose up to a six-month suspension. (Veh. Code, § 13200.) For a second or subsequent conviction, the DMV may also impose a suspension of up to six months (Veh. Code, §§ 13361, subd. (b); 13556, subd. (a).) Further, if a person accumulates three or more reckless driving or hit and run convictions within 12 months, the DMV is required to issue a three-year license revocation. (Veh. Code, § 13351, subs. (a)(2) & (c).) In addition to the above, a conviction for reckless driving adds two points to a person's driving record, which can lead to an administrative DMV-imposed suspension. (Veh. Code, § 12810, subd. (c).)

This bill makes several changes related to court-imposed license suspensions, to take effect on January 1, 2028. First, it lengthens the maximum duration of court-imposed license suspensions for reckless driving. For a first-time reckless driving conviction, it increases the maximum possible license suspension from 30 days to 60 days; for a second conviction, from a period of up to 60 days to a period of 30 days to six months; and for a third or subsequent conviction, from a period of up to six months to a period of 90 days to one year. Second, it makes a court-imposed suspension for a third or subsequent conviction mandatory rather than discretionary. Consistent with existing law, under this bill, a court may not impose a license suspension for a reckless driving conviction if the Vehicle Code also requires a mandatory revocation by the DMV.

b) *Impoundment of Vehicles for Reckless Driving*

Existing law provides for multiple avenues to impound vehicles involved in crimes such as reckless driving, a speed contest, or an exhibition of speed. First, a magistrate presented with a peace officer affidavit establishing reasonable cause that a vehicle was used in the officer's presence in violation of any of these offenses may issue a warrant authorizing an officer to seize and remove the vehicle, to be impounded for up to 30 days. (Veh. Code, § 14602.7, subd. (a)(1).) Second, and most relevant to this bill, impoundment may be triggered by a peace officer arresting and taking a person into custody. Specifically, a peace officer who determines whether a person engaged in reckless driving, a speed contest, or an exhibition of speed may immediately arrest and take into custody that person, and cause the removal and seizure of the vehicle used in the offense. (Veh. Code, § 23109.2, subd. (a)(1).) Like the impoundment of vehicles through a warrant, the seized vehicle cannot be impounded for more than 30 days. (*Ibid.*) Upon impoundment following a peace officer's arrest, the registered and legal owner of the vehicle or their agents must be provided the opportunity for a storage hearing to determine the validity of the storage. (Veh. Code, § 23109.2, subd. (b).) A notice of the storage must be mailed or personally delivered to the owners within 48 hours, and must include specified information. (Veh. Code, § 22852, subd. (b).) The registered owner or their agent is generally responsible for all towing and storage charges related to impoundment, and any administrative charges. (Veh. Code, § 23109.2, subd. (e)(1)).

Impounding agencies are required to release a vehicle to the registered owner before the conclusion of the impoundment period in the following circumstances: 1) if the vehicle was

stolen; 2) if the person alleged to have engaged in a speed contest was not authorized to operate the vehicle; 3) the registered owner was not the driver or passenger during the offense or was unaware the driver was using the vehicle; 4) the legal or registered owner is a rental car agency; and 5) if before the end of the impoundment period, a citation or notice is dismissed, criminal charges are not filed because of lack of evidence, or the charges are otherwise dismissed. (Veh. Code, § 23109.2, subd. (c)(1).) Additionally, an impounded vehicle must be released to the legal owner of the vehicle by the 30th day of impoundment, if the legal owner is a dealer, bank, credit union, financial institution, or another person holding a security interest in the vehicle, that entity or person pays all towing and storage fees related to impoundment, and the legal owner presents foreclosure documents or an affidavit of repossession for the vehicle. (Veh. Code, § 23109.2, subd. (d).)

Currently, both statutory avenues to impound a vehicle for reckless driving, whether by a magistrate-issued warrant or incident to a peace officer arrest, also apply to the crimes of a speed contest and exhibition of speed. This bill removes reckless driving from the list of offenses covered by the existing statute authorizing impoundment of a vehicle incident to a peace officer arrest and establishes a standalone impoundment statute specific to reckless driving following a peace officer arrest. The proposed standalone statute is distinct from the existing statute authorizing impoundment of vehicles incident to an arrest in several ways.

First, it requires the release of a vehicle to the registered owner before the conclusion of the impoundment period if the person alleged to have been engaged in reckless driving was not authorized by the owner to operate the vehicle at the time of the offense. Currently, this relief is only available to a person alleged to have engaged in a speed contest. (Veh. Code, § 23109.2, subd. (c)(1)(B).) Second, the bill creates a new evidentiary requirement that, for an owner to avail themselves of this relief for unauthorized use, the owner must provide evidence that the person did not have authorization from the registered owner to operate the vehicle. Evidence may include theft reports, documented history of unauthorized use, or communication denying use of the vehicle. This may make it more difficult for certain owners to recover their impounded vehicles. For example, if a teenage driver were to take a car without their parents' authorization, and the unauthorized use is only discovered after the fact, it is somewhat unclear what type of evidence that parent could produce to prove that their teenager was not authorized to operate the vehicle at the time of the offense.

Third, it imposes new restrictions on the existing requirement that an agency release a vehicle to the registered owner before the conclusion of the impoundment period if the owner was neither the driver nor passenger of the vehicle at the time of the violation or was unaware that the driver was using a vehicle to engage in reckless driving. This bill adds two new requirements to secure this relief; restrictions that would only apply to vehicles impounded due to reckless driving. The bill requires owners, in order to recover their vehicles under this provision, to submit a written, signed statement attesting that the registered owner was unaware that the driver was using the vehicle to engage in reckless driving. Additionally, it states that this relief shall only be available to a registered owner three times. The bill prohibits a registered owner from using this relief for a fourth or any subsequent arrest for reckless driving that involves the same driver and vehicle. For example, consider a scenario where a teenage driver repeatedly used their parent's vehicle to engage in reckless driving without their parent's awareness. Under this bill, the parent may be able to recover the vehicle before the end of the 30-day impoundment period on the first three occasions because they were unaware their child had taken the vehicle. However, upon the

fourth instance of reckless driving, which results in impoundment, this bill would prohibit this relief from being available to that parent, and the vehicle may be subject to the entirety of the 30-day impoundment.

Fourth, it provides that if a vehicle is released to the owner before the end of the impoundment period because a citation is dismissed, charges are not filed, or the charges are otherwise dismissed, neither the person charged with reckless driving nor the owner is responsible for towing and storage charges, nor shall the vehicle be sold to satisfy those charges. Currently, this provision only applies to a person charged with engaging in a speed contest. (Veh. Code, § 23109.2, subd. (c)(3).)

- 5) **Distinct Impoundment Procedures:** Currently, the criminal penalties for reckless driving are very similar to those for a speed contest and an exhibition of speed. Singling out reckless driving for lengthier impoundment periods and distinct impoundment procedures may contribute to inconsistent impoundment procedures for comparably similar offenses.

The crimes of a speed contest, an exhibition of speed, and reckless driving are subject to very similar criminal penalties. Each of these offenses is a low-level misdemeanor punishable by up to 90 days in county jail. (Veh. Code, §§ 23103; 23109, subds. (e)(1) & (i)(1).) The penalties for reckless driving and speed contests that result in injury, or where the person is a repeat offender, are also largely the same. For example, 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. (Veh. Code, §§ 23109, subd. (f)(1); 23104, subd. (a).) If the speed contest or reckless driving proximately causes specified injuries to another person, including loss of consciousness, a concussion, or a bone fracture, the offense becomes a wobblers. (Veh. Code, §§ 23109.1; 23105.) In part due to these similarities, current law includes each of these offenses within the same statutes authorizing impoundments of vehicles following a magistrate-issued warrant and authorizing impoundments incident to a peace officer arrest. (Veh. Code, §§ 23109.2; 14602.7, subd. (a).) The primary outlier in the generally similar punishments for these offenses is license suspensions: a conviction for a speed contest results in a lengthier suspension of 90 days to six months. (Veh. Code, § 23109, subd. (e)(1).)

This bill subjects vehicles impounded for reckless driving incident to an arrest to different impoundment procedures than comparably similar offenses. For example, it establishes new impoundment provisions – a requirement that owners provide evidence of unauthorized use to secure impoundment relief, and a restriction on how many times an owner can secure impoundment relief if they were unaware their vehicle was being used, among others – that only apply to vehicles impounded for reckless driving. Given that reckless driving, speed contests, and exhibitions of speed are comparable crimes that are punished similarly, this may contribute to inconsistency and undue complexity in the impoundment procedures for these offenses.

- 6) **Prior Governor Vetoes:** In the last ten years, three bills relating to vehicle impoundments for reckless driving have been vetoed by multiple governors. The crux of the vetoes, as described in the signing messages, has been judicial discretion, and the fact that judges already have discretion to impound vehicles for reckless driving for up to 30 days. SB 510 (Hall), of the 2015-2016 Legislative Session, would have required, rather than permitted, the

30-day impoundment of a vehicle for a person convicted of reckless driving. Governor Brown vetoed that bill, stating the following:

This bill requires courts to impose a mandatory 30-day vehicle impoundment for any case of reckless driving or engaging in an illegal speed contest.

Current law already allows judges - who see and evaluate first-hand the facts of each case - to impound cars for up to 30 days when circumstances warrant. Accordingly, there would be no reason for this law except to supplant sound judicial discretion with robotic and abstract justice - something I don't support.¹

In 2017, the Legislature passed AB 1393 (Friedman), which similarly mandated that if a person is convicted of reckless driving, and it is their second or subsequent offense, the vehicle used in the offense must be impounded for 30 days. Governor Brown vetoed the bill and issued a substantially similar veto message.² Most recently, the Legislature passed AB 1407 (Friedman) of the 2019-2020 Legislative Session, which was substantially similar to AB 1393. Governor Newsom vetoed this bill, stating the following:

Under current law, a conviction for reckless driving is punishable by a total fine of between \$684 and \$4,175 and possible jail time of between 5 and 90 days. A conviction for engaging in a first offense speed contest is punishable by a total fine of between \$1,551 and \$4,175, jail time between 1 and 90 days, 40 hours of community service and potential driver's license suspension between 90 days and 6 months. Subsequent convictions have even stronger penalties.

Courts currently have the authority to impound vehicles based on the totality of facts and circumstances of each case. This bill reduces the courts' discretion in deciding to impound a vehicle, as well as the length of time the vehicle is impounded.³

SB 1198 is largely distinguishable from these bills in that it does not mandate impoundment of vehicles for reckless driving. However, concerns regarding the sufficiency of existing impoundment options for reckless driving that are available to judges and peace officers may remain. Further, certain provisions of this bill reduce or eliminate judicial discretion over the penalties for reckless driving offenses. The bill requires, rather than permits, a court to suspend the license of a person convicted of their third or subsequent reckless driving offense. It also establishes mandatory minimum suspension lengths for when courts do opt to issue license suspensions. Currently, the primary limit on a court-imposed license suspension

¹ Governor's veto message to Sen. on Sen. Bill No. 510 (Oct. 3, 2015) <https://archive.gov.ca.gov/archive/gov39/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/SB_510_Veto_Message.pdf> [as of June 8, 2026].

² Governor's veto message to Assem. on Assem. Bill No. 1393 (Oct. 4, 2017) <https://archive.gov.ca.gov/archive/gov39/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/AB_1393_Veto_Message_2017.pdf> [as of June 8, 2026].

³ Governor's veto message to Assem. on Assem. Bill No. 1407 (Oct. 11, 2019) <<https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/AB-1407-Veto-Message.pdf>> [as of June 8, 2026].

for reckless driving is that it cannot exceed a maximum amount of time. (Veh. Code, § 13200.) This bill requires, if a court opts to impose a license suspension for a person's second reckless driving conviction, that the suspension must be at least 30 days. Upon a third or subsequent reckless driving conviction, it requires the court to impose a license suspension of at least 90 days. To preserve judicial discretion, the author may wish to consider restoring discretion over whether to suspend a license for a third reckless driving conviction and removing the provisions of the bill establishing minimum license suspension periods.

- 7) **Impact of License Suspensions on Jobs and Wages.** Extending the license suspensions for individuals convicted of reckless driving may negatively impact individuals who rely on their vehicles to drive to work, take their children to school, and attend medical appointments, among other life necessities. A license suspension “can make it harder to find and keep a job, can increase one’s exposure to the criminal legal system, and can generally place a great strain on one’s life and the life of one’s family.”⁴ Research has found that “having a valid driver’s license and possession of a car is a stronger predictor of finding employment and leaving public assistance than a high school diploma.”⁵ Almost 30% of jobs require some amount of driving, and 75% of workers commute to work in a car.⁶

According to a study on the impacts of license suspension in New Jersey conducted by Rutgers, the New Jersey Department of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration, 42% of individuals with a history of license suspension lost their jobs when they had their driving privileges suspended.⁷ Job loss was most significant among low-income and younger drivers.⁸ 45% of those who lost their job because of the suspension could not find another job, a trend that was most pronounced among low-income and older drivers.⁹ Further, of those who were able to find another job, 88% reported a decrease in income.¹⁰ This was most true for low-income drivers. Finally, more than half of those with a history of license suspension reported that they could not afford the increased cost of auto insurance as a result of the suspension.¹¹

Research suggests that an estimated 75% of suspended drivers continue to drive.¹² Individuals who have their licenses suspended may simply “choose to keep driving because they have to work, which puts them at serious legal risk if they are caught driving with suspended licenses.”¹³ In California, individuals who drive on a suspended or revoked license can be subject to additional criminal penalties and fines. Existing law makes it a crime for a

⁴ U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, *Challenges to Employment: Fines, Fees, and License Suspensions* (Dec. 2022), <<https://acf.gov/opre/report/challenges-employment-fines-fees-license-suspensions>> [as of June 19, 2026].

⁵ Leiva et al., *Challenges to Employment: Fines, Fees, and License Suspensions*, Building Evidence of Employment Strategies (Nov. 2022), at p. 4 <https://acf.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/bees_orlando_brief.pdf> [as of June 19, 2026].

⁶ *Id.* at p. 1.

⁷ Driver’s License Suspensions, Impacts and Fairness Study, New Jersey Department of Transportation (Aug. 2007), at p. 56, <https://vtc.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/MVC-DL-Suspension-Study-Final-Report-Vol1_9-13-07_.pdf> [as of June 19, 2026].

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, *Reducing Suspended Drivers and Alternative Reinstatement Best Practices: Edition 3* (May 2021), at p. 3 <<https://www.aamva.org/getmedia/b92cc79d-560f-4def-879c-6d6e430e4f4d/Reducing-Suspended-Drivers-and-Alternative-Reinstatement-Best-Practices-Edition-3.pdf>> [as of June 19, 2026].

¹³ Leiva, *supra*, at p. 1.

person to drive a vehicle while their license is suspended for reckless driving. (Veh. Code, § 14601, subds. (a)-(b).)

- 8) **Argument in Support:** According to the *Burbank Armenian Association*, “The Burbank Armenian Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening our community through civic engagement and public safety advocacy. Following the tragic high speed crash on Glenoaks Boulevard in 2021 that claimed the lives of three young people, our organization launched the Burbank Community’s Drive Right, Save Lives Driver Safety Campaign in partnership with local law enforcement, schools, and more than 30 community organizations to promote awareness, education, and prevention.

“Reckless driving continues to pose a serious and preventable threat to public safety across California and within our local communities. According to enforcement data from the Burbank and Glendale Police Departments, officers encounter approximately 9,900 speeding violations, 780 hit and run incidents, 100 reckless driving violations, and 40 street racing incidents each year, contributing to hundreds of collisions involving injury or death.³ This reflects a broader statewide crisis. In 2025 alone, California recorded 2,390 fatalities and more than 160,000 crashes involving injury or death, with reckless driving among the primary contributing factors.

“Current law does not provide sufficient tools to deter repeat reckless driving or ensure accountability. SB 1198 will strengthen enforcement, increase penalties for repeat offenders, and establish meaningful accountability measures to help prevent future tragedies. The Burbank Armenian Association is honored to serve as a sponsor of SB 1198 and respectfully urges its passage to protect families and improve public safety across California.”

- 9) **Argument in Opposition:** According to *La Defensa*, “Reckless driving already carries numerous consequences under current law. Reckless driving is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to \$1000 and 90 days of incarceration. If the violation results in injuries, the punishments are steeper. Current law also authorizes a police officer to impound an individual’s vehicle for up to 30 days. Moreover, a court may suspend an individual’s license for up to 6 months. On a national level, California’s punishment scheme is the same or harsher than 31 other states. Despite this, SB 1198 would ratchet up the license suspension and vehicle impoundment durations.

“[V]ehicle impoundments punish entire families, not just the individual who violated the Vehicle Code. For example, a mother’s car may be impounded because her child caused a violation while driving the car. This can have devastating impacts as tow and storage fees are often more than people can afford, and when an individual cannot pay the fees associated with the impoundment, the vehicle is sold at auction. According to a 2018 federal report, 46% of American adults lack the savings necessary to cover an unanticipated expense of \$400 or more. But a report from the following year found that the average towing and storage fees in California for a vehicle that is held for just 3 days is nearly \$500. We should not punish families in this way, especially when vehicles are often key to a family’s ability to get to work, go grocery shopping, pick children up from school, or get to the hospital in an emergency.

“Moreover, SB 1198’s impoundment scheme punishes the owner of the vehicle, regardless of if they were the driver at the time of the violation. Although the issues of tow and storage

fees exist under the current scheme, current law allows a registered owner to retrieve their car before the impoundment period concludes if they can show that they were neither the passenger or the driver at the time of the violation or that they were unaware that the driver was using the vehicle.⁹ SB 1198 strictly limits this relief, stating that a registered owner can only avail themselves of this relief three times. In doing so, SB 1198 unnecessarily punishes innocent registered owners and further exacerbates the issue of impoundments devastating families' economic stability. Additionally, this provision raises potential Due Process concerns as the State would be impounding innocent owners' vehicles, without any avenue for recourse, solely because of events outside of the innocent owner's knowledge or control."

10) Related Legislation:

- a) AB 1588 (Stefani) would establish 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. AB 1588 is pending a hearing in the Senate Transportation Committee.
- b) AB 1687 (Lackey) would authorize the DMV to revoke a person's driver's license for eight years if they are convicted of three or more specified impaired driving offenses within ten years. AB 1687 is pending a hearing in the Senate Public Safety Committee.
- c) AB 1748 (Sanchez) would have increased the length of the driver's license suspensions and revocations that apply to a conviction for a DUI or a conviction for a DUI causing bodily injury. AB 1748 failed passage in this Committee.

11) Prior Legislation:

- a) AB 983 (Macedo), of the 2025-2026 Legislative Session, would have authorized vehicle impoundment for any violation of speeding in excess of 100 miles per hour, as specified. The hearing on AB 983 was canceled at the author's request.
- b) AB 1407 (Friedman), of the 2019-2020 Legislative Session, would have authorized law enforcement to impound a vehicle for 30 days if the vehicle's registered owner is convicted of reckless driving, and would have required the vehicle to be impounded for 30 days for a second or subsequent offense. AB 1407 was vetoed.
- c) AB 1393 (Friedman), of the 2017-2018 Legislative Session, would have provided that if a person is convicted of reckless driving, and it is their second or subsequent offense, the vehicle used in the offense must be impounded for 30 days. AB 1393 was vetoed.
- d) SB 510 (Hall), of the 2015-2016 Legislative Session, would have required, rather than allowed, a vehicle that is determined to have been involved in a speed contest or engaged in reckless driving to be impounded for 30 days. SB 510 was vetoed.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Burbank Armenian Association (Sponsor)
Arcadia Police Officers' Association

Armenian National Committee of America Burbank Chapter
Boys & Girls Club of Burbank and Greater East Valley
Brea Police Association
Burbank Police Officers' Association
Burbank/burbank Redevelopment Agency; City of
California Association of Highway Patrolmen
California Association of School Police Chiefs
California Coalition of School Safety Professionals
California Narcotic Officers' Association
California Police Chiefs Association
California Reserve Peace Officers Association
City of Pico Rivera
Claremont Police Officers Association
Corona Police Officers Association
Culver City Police Officers' Association
Fullerton Police Officers' Association
Justice for Four Angels
Los Angeles School Police Management Association
Los Angeles School Police Officers Association
Mid Valley Family YMCA
Murrieta Police Officers' Association
Newport Beach Police Association
Palos Verdes Police Officers Association
Peace Officers Research Association of California (PORAC)
Placer County Deputy Sheriffs' Association
Pomona Police Officers' Association
Riverside Police Officers Association
Riverside Sheriffs' Association
Streets are for Everyone (SAFE) (ORG)
Streets for All
The East Valley Family YMCA
West Valley Family YMCA

Opposition

ACLU California Action
All of US or None (HQ)
California Attorneys for Criminal Justice
Felony Murder Elimination Project
Justice2jobs Coalition
LA Defensa
Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area
Legal Services for Prisoners With Children
Local 148 Los Angeles County Public Defender's Union
San Francisco Public Defender