



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 15, 2017

Contact: Allison Ruff
(916) 319-2043

Legislature Passes Tougher Penalties for Reckless Driving

SACRAMENTO – The California legislature has passed Assembly Bill 1393 by Assemblymember Laura Friedman (D-Glendale) with broad, bipartisan support, sending the measure to Governor Brown for final approval. AB 1393 requires a 30-day impound penalty for a vehicle used in connection with a speed contest or reckless driving on the second or subsequent offense. The bill also requires the removal of any illegal modifications to the vehicle.

“This is common sense and long overdue,” said Friedman. “Reckless driving puts lives at risk and a 30-day impound penalty stops this callous behavior in its tracks.”

Illegal street racing continues to create a significant public safety threat across California. Traffic data collected by the California Highway Patrol (CHP) show that over a four-year period, the CHP issued citations resulting in 12,586 convictions for engaging in, aiding, or abetting exhibition of speed on a highway.

In order to combat street racing and reckless driving, law enforcement entities have turned to evidence-based penalties like extended vehicle impoundments that have proven to change driver behavior. A recent study by the National Highway Safety Administration evaluated California’s 30-day impound requirement for motorists driving with a suspended license and found that the impoundment of the vehicle substantially reduced a driver’s subsequent violations and crashes. A California Department of Motor Vehicles study of the same requirement noted that the penalty resulted in an estimated 38% reduction in subsequent crashes and up to a 23% reduction in subsequent convictions when a driver’s vehicle was impounded.

In contrast to the requirements for convictions connected to a suspended license violation, California currently allows, but does not require, the impoundment of a vehicle used in connection to a reckless driving, speed racing, or sideshows. While courts can impound a vehicle, drivers have the ability to retrieve their vehicle through a variety of methods. For those vehicles that have been modified illegally, current law does not require the removal of those modifications in connection with the impoundment which has allowed a vehicle’s owner to retrieve a vehicle, with all of its modifications intact, within a few days.

AB 1393 maintains judicial discretion on the first offense for reckless driving, and in cases where a 30-day impoundment will impose an undue hardship on a defendant's family, the bill provides an avenue for courts to waive the requirement.

Governor Brown now has until October 15th to sign or veto the measure.

##

Laura Friedman represents the 43rd Assembly District which encompasses the cities of Burbank, Glendale, and La Cañada Flintridge, as well as the communities of La Crescenta and Montrose, and the Los Angeles neighborhoods of Atwater Village, Beachwood Canyon, Los Feliz, East Hollywood, Franklin Hills, and Silver Lake.