



ASSEMBLY MEMBER MIKE ENG
AB 2951 Street Racing
Sponsored by: Victims Against Street Racing

THE PROBLEM

Illegal speed contests pose a real threat to the health and safety of the public, interferes with pedestrian and vehicular traffic, creates a public nuisance, and requires significant law enforcement resources to combat. According to the California Office of Traffic Safety, about 100 people die each year in California as a result of illegal speed contests. Further, according to the Department of Motor Vehicles, in 2007 there were 1,299 convictions for illegal speed contests and 4,338 convictions for the exhibition of speed.

THE SOLUTION

This measure seeks to reduce the number of innocent people that are killed and injured as a result of illegal street racing collisions. Specifically, AB 2951 will authorize a county or city to declare a violator's motor vehicle a nuisance upon a second illegal street racing conviction and have the vehicle either forfeited or crushed at an auto yard.

BACKGROUND

This legislation stems from several fatal accidents involving illegal street racing, one in which resulted in the death of an El Monte woman and her two children. On October 13, 2007, Dora Groce, 41, her son Robert, 8, and daughter Catherine, 4, were killed in a fiery auto crash, after her car was broadsided by a street racer on Parkway Drive at Elliott Avenue in El Monte.

Over the past few years, law enforcement agencies throughout the state have been reporting a steady increase in street racing activities. Such activities include, but are not limited to, drag racing, freeway racing, and sideshows. The data is alarming; however, according to numerous law enforcement agencies the numbers could even be higher due to underreporting.

According to the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services of the U.S Department of Justice, traditional efforts such as issuing citations to racers or spectators may be ineffective and a weak deterrent, because many such illegal street racers believe that a citation is "just part of doing business." Vehicle forfeiture and disposal, on the other hand, have been utilized by numerous law enforcement agencies and have proven to be effective. For example, since the adoption of its vehicle forfeiture ordinance in 2005, the city of San Diego has witnessed a drastic reduction in the number of vehicles assembling on the streets for illegal street racing activities.

Staff Contact: If you would like to support this bill or need additional information, please contact Annie Lam in Assemblymember Mike Eng's office at (916) 319-2049 or Annie.Lam@asm.ca.gov