

Assembly Bill No. 1394

CHAPTER 431

An act to amend Section 350 of the Penal Code, relating to counterfeiting.

[Approved by Governor September 27, 2008. Filed with
Secretary of State September 27, 2008.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1394, Krekorian. Counterfeit: trademarks.

Existing law makes it a misdemeanor or a felony for a person to willfully manufacture, intentionally sell, or knowingly possess for sale any counterfeit registered trademark, as specified. Existing law provides for the punishment for the violation and subsequent violations of these provisions if the person is a corporation. Existing law also provides, upon conviction, for the forfeiture and destruction of all the counterfeit trademarks and related articles, as specified. Existing law regarding counterfeited trademarks also applies to unassembled components of computer software packages. Under existing law, a court is required to order restitution, as specified, to a victim of a crime.

This bill would make those punishment provisions relating to corporations instead applicable to business entities and would define "business entity" as including a corporation, limited liability company, or partnership. This bill would specify the procedure for the forfeiture of the counterfeited items. This bill would also expand the definition of a "counterfeit mark" and would apply those provisions to the unassembled components of any counterfeited article, as specified.

Because this bill would expand the definition of an existing crime, it would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 350 of the Penal Code is amended to read:

350. (a) Any person who willfully manufactures, intentionally sells, or knowingly possesses for sale any counterfeit mark registered with the Secretary of State or registered on the Principal Register of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, shall, upon conviction, be punishable as follows:

(1) When the offense involves less than 1,000 of the articles described in this subdivision, with a total retail or fair market value less than that required for grand theft as defined in Section 487, and if the person is an individual, he or she shall be punished by a fine of not more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000), or by imprisonment in a county jail for not more than one year, or by both that fine and imprisonment; or, if the person is a business entity, by a fine of not more than one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000).

(2) When the offense involves 1,000 or more of the articles described in this subdivision, or has a total retail or fair market value equal to or greater than that required for grand theft as defined in Section 487, and if the person is an individual, he or she shall be punished by imprisonment in a county jail not to exceed one year, or in the state prison for 16 months, or two or three years, or by a fine not to exceed two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000), or by both that imprisonment and fine; or, if the person is a business entity, by a fine not to exceed five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000).

(b) Any person who has been convicted of a violation of either paragraph (1) or (2) of subdivision (a) shall, upon a subsequent conviction of paragraph (1) of subdivision (a), if the person is an individual, be punished by a fine of not more than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000), or by imprisonment in a county jail for not more than one year, or in the state prison for 16 months, or two or three years, or by both that fine and imprisonment; or, if the person is a business entity, by a fine of not more than two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000).

(c) Any person who has been convicted of a violation of subdivision (a) and who, by virtue of the conduct that was the basis of the conviction, has directly and foreseeably caused death or great bodily injury to another through reliance on the counterfeited item for its intended purpose shall, if the person is an individual, be punished by a fine of not more than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000), or by imprisonment in the state prison for two, three, or four years, or by both that fine and imprisonment; or, if the person is a business entity, by a fine of not more than two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000).

(d) In any action brought under this section resulting in a conviction or a plea of nolo contendere, the court shall order the forfeiture and destruction of all of those marks and of all goods, articles, or other matter bearing the marks, and the forfeiture and destruction or other disposition of all means of making the marks, and any and all electrical, mechanical, or other devices for manufacturing, reproducing, transporting, or assembling these marks, that were used in connection with, or were part of, any violation of this section. Forfeiture of the proceeds of the crime shall be subject to Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 186) of Title 7 of Part 1. However, no vehicle shall be forfeited under this section that may be lawfully driven on the highway with a class 3 or 4 license, as prescribed in Section 12804 of the Vehicle Code, and that is any of the following:

(1) A community property asset of a person other than the defendant.

(2) The sole class 3 or 4 vehicle available to the immediate family of that person or of the defendant.

(3) Reasonably necessary to be retained by the defendant for the purpose of lawfully earning a living, or for any other reasonable and lawful purpose.

(e) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) When counterfeited but unassembled components of computer software packages are recovered, including, but not limited to, counterfeited computer diskettes, instruction manuals, or licensing envelopes, the number of “articles” shall be equivalent to the number of completed computer software packages that could have been made from those components.

(2) “Business entity” includes, but is not limited to, a corporation, limited liability company, or partnership. “Business entity” does not include a sole proprietorship.

(3) “Counterfeit mark” means a spurious mark that is identical with, or confusingly similar to, a registered mark and is used, or intended to be used, on or in connection with the same type of goods or services for which the genuine mark is registered. It is not necessary for the mark to be displayed on the outside of an article for there to be a violation. For articles containing digitally stored information, it shall be sufficient to constitute a violation if the counterfeit mark appears on a video display when the information is retrieved from the article. The term “spurious mark” includes genuine marks used on or in connection with spurious articles and includes identical articles containing identical marks, where the goods or marks were reproduced without authorization of, or in excess of any authorization granted by, the registrant. When counterfeited but unassembled components of any articles described under subdivision (a) are recovered, including, but not limited to, labels, patches, fabric, stickers, wrappers, badges, emblems, medallions, charms, boxes, containers, cans, cases, hangtags, documentation, or packaging, or any other components of any type or nature that are designed, marketed, or otherwise intended to be used on or in connection with any articles described under subdivision (a), the number of “articles” shall be equivalent to the number of completed articles that could have been made from those components.

(4) “Knowingly possess” means that the person possessing an article knew or had reason to believe that it was spurious, or that it was used on or in connection with spurious articles, or that it was reproduced without authorization of, or in excess of any authorization granted by, the registrant.

(5) Notwithstanding Section 7, “person” includes, but is not limited to, a business entity.

(6) “Registrant” means any person to whom the registration of a mark is issued and that person’s legal representatives, successors, or assigns.

(7) “Sale” includes resale.

(8) “Value” has the following meanings:

(A) When counterfeit items of computer software are manufactured or possessed for sale, the “value” of those items shall be equivalent to the retail price or fair market price of the true items that are counterfeited.

(B) When counterfeited but unassembled components of computer software packages or any other articles described under subdivision (a) are recovered, including, but not limited to, counterfeited digital disks, instruction manuals, licensing envelopes, labels, patches, fabric, stickers, wrappers, badges, emblems, medallions, charms, boxes, containers, cans, cases, hangtags, documentation, or packaging, or any other components of any type or nature that are designed, marketed, or otherwise intended to be used on or in connection with any articles described under subdivision (a), the “value” of those components shall be equivalent to the retail price or fair market value of the number of completed computer software packages or other completed articles described under subdivision (a) that could have been made from those components.

(C) “Retail or fair market value” of a counterfeit article means a value equivalent to the retail price or fair market value, as of the last day of the charged crime, of a completed similar genuine article containing a genuine mark.

(f) This section shall not be enforced against any party who has adopted and lawfully used the same or confusingly similar mark in the rendition of like services or the manufacture or sale of like goods in this state from a date prior to the earliest effective date of registration of the service mark or trademark either with the Secretary of State or on the Principle Register of the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

(g) An owner, officer, employee, or agent who provides, rents, leases, licenses, or sells real property upon which a violation of subdivision (a) occurs shall not be subject to a criminal penalty pursuant to this section, unless he or she sells, or possesses for sale, articles bearing a counterfeit mark in violation of this section. This subdivision shall not be construed to abrogate or limit any civil rights or remedies for a trademark violation.

(h) This section shall not be enforced against any party who engages in fair uses of a mark, as specified in Section 14247 of the Business and Professions Code.

(i) When a person is convicted of an offense under this section, the court shall order the person to pay restitution to the trademark owner and any other victim of the offense pursuant to Section 1202.4.

SEC. 2. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.