

## MONEY MYTHS SERIES

# Anonymous Wyoming and Nevada LLCs: Why They Don't Protect Californians

*Why a Wyoming or Nevada anonymous LLC run from California owes the \$800 tax, must disclose its managers, and can still be reached by a California creditor.*

By Eric Ridley, attorney, Ridley Law · Updated September 2026 · Read online with live links: [ridleylawoffices.com/anonymous-llc/](https://ridleylawoffices.com/anonymous-llc/)

Part of our [money myths series](#).

**The claim:** form an anonymous LLC in Wyoming or Nevada, put your assets in it, and nobody can find out what you own or take it in a lawsuit.

**The verdict:** for someone who lives in California, the out-of-state LLC is "doing business" here as soon as you manage it from here. It owes California's \$800 annual tax, has to register, and once it registers it files a public statement naming its managers or members. A California court can still order a charged LLC interest sold, and your anonymity ends at the first judgment-debtor exam.

This page covers the social media version of the pitch. Our longer guide, [why out-of-state LLCs won't save you in California](#), goes deeper on charging orders, series LLCs and offshore structures.

**\$800**

California tax a Wyoming or Nevada LLC owes each year once it does business here

**\$5,955**

Five-year state fees for a Nevada LLC run from California, vs. \$4,130 for a California LLC

**\$2,000**

FTB penalty per year on an unregistered foreign LLC that won't file after demand, R&TC § 19135

**7 years**

Outside limit to undo a transfer made to dodge creditors, Civ. Code § 3439.09

**Aug. 14, 2026**

FinCEN final rule took effect; U.S. LLCs file no federal ownership report

**Who gets paid when you follow this advice:** two states and at least two registered agents. Wyoming charges \$100 to form an LLC and a \$60 minimum annual report. Nevada charges \$75 for articles, \$150 for the initial list and each annual list, and \$200 a year for a state business license. California then charges the same \$800 a year it would charge a California LLC, plus \$70 to register and \$20 every two years for the statement of information. Add a registered agent in each state, which is where the "anonymous LLC package" sellers earn their recurring fees; we found no neutral source for those prices, so we left them out of our numbers. In 2007 the FTC banned an "asset protection" company that sold a \$9,800 program built on Nevada corporations for clients who "wanted financial privacy"; the FTC found about 94% of the buyers never earned back their fee. The Justice Department separately alleged that the company's owner "established thousands of Nevada corporations for customers to use as nominees to hide their income and assets."

## Does a Wyoming or Nevada LLC have to register in California?

Yes, if it's doing business here, and the Franchise Tax Board says an LLC is doing business in California "if any of the LLC's members, managers, or other agents performs activities in California on behalf of the LLC, regardless of where the LLC otherwise conducts business."

The FTB's own example in Publication 3556 is the anonymous-LLC pitch. Paul, a California resident, is a member of a Nevada LLC that owns property in Nevada. He occasionally talks by phone from California with the Nevada management company and oversees it. The FTB's conclusion: "Paul conducts business in California on behalf of the LLC. The LLC must file Form 568." The statute is just as broad. "Doing business" means "actively engaging in any transaction for the purpose of financial or pecuniary gain or profit" in California (Rev. & Tax. Code § 23101), and the \$800 annual tax applies to any LLC doing business here, whether it was formed "under the law of this state, any other country, or any other state" (Rev. & Tax. Code § 17941). The FTB says the tax is due "even if you are not conducting business, until you cancel your LLC."

Skipping registration doesn't save the money and costs you more. An unregistered foreign LLC that transacts intrastate business "shall not maintain an action or proceeding in this state," so it can't sue a tenant or a contractor here (Corp. Code § 17708.07). The FTB can add a \$2,000 penalty for each year a foreign LLC that fails to qualify keeps doing business here without filing after a demand (Rev. & Tax. Code § 19135). If the LLC doesn't file or pay, its powers can be "forfeited (foreign LLC)," and contracts it signs during forfeiture are voidable.

### California LLC

 **\$4,130**

### Wyoming LLC registered in California

 **\$4,470**

### Nevada LLC registered in California

 **\$5,955**

State fees only. California: \$800 annual tax, \$70 to form or register, \$20 statement of information every two years. Wyoming: \$100 to form, \$60 minimum annual report. Nevada: \$75 articles, \$150 initial and annual list, \$200 state business license each year. Registered agents excluded.

| Year         | California LLC | Wyoming LLC + CA registration | Nevada LLC + CA registration |
|--------------|----------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1            | \$890          | \$990                         | \$1,315                      |
| 2            | \$800          | \$860                         | \$1,150                      |
| 3            | \$820          | \$880                         | \$1,170                      |
| 4            | \$800          | \$860                         | \$1,150                      |
| 5            | \$820          | \$880                         | \$1,170                      |
| 5-year total | \$4,130        | \$4,470                       | \$5,955                      |

The fair exception: a truly passive, minority stake isn't doing business. In *Swart Enterprises, Inc. v. Franchise Tax Board* (2017) 7 Cal.App.5th 497, an out-of-state company that held "a 0.2 percent ownership interest, with no right of control" in a California LLC wasn't doing business here. Owning and running your own LLC from California is the opposite situation.

## Does an anonymous LLC keep your name private in California?

No: once a foreign LLC registers here, it must file a statement of information listing "the name and complete business or residence addresses of any manager or managers," or of its members if it has no manager, and the Secretary of State says those addresses are "a public record, open to all."

Every foreign LLC registered to do business in California files that statement within 90 days and every two years after (Corp. Code § 17702.09). Nevada's annual list names managers or managing members with their addresses too, and Nevada law penalizes listing a nominee manager "with the fraudulent intent of concealing the identity" of the people really in charge in furtherance of unlawful conduct. The Wyoming filing may not show your name. California's will.

Privacy also ends the day someone wins a judgment against you. A creditor can get a court order requiring you to appear and answer questions under oath about what you own, and the order warns that if you don't appear "you may be subject to arrest and punishment for contempt of court" (Code Civ. Proc. § 708.110). Anyone holding your property worth more than \$250, including your own LLC or its agent, can be examined too (Code Civ. Proc. § 708.120). An LLC that hides your name from a stranger browsing a database doesn't hide anything from a judgment creditor.

## Do LLCs still have to file a beneficial ownership report with FinCEN?

Not if they're U.S. companies: FinCEN's final rule, effective August 14, 2026, "adopts the blanket exemption approach" of its March 2025 interim rule, so domestic LLCs don't report their owners under the Corporate Transparency Act.

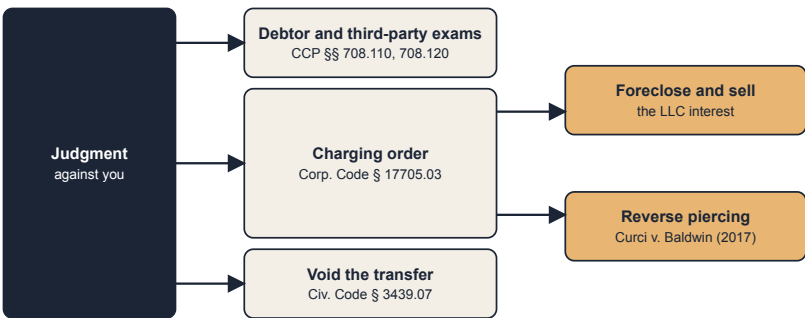
FinCEN says it issued the final rule on August 11, 2026. A separate FinCEN rule that would have required reports on cash purchases of homes by LLCs and trusts was vacated by a federal court in Texas on March 19, 2026, and is on appeal. None of this makes a Wyoming LLC more private in California, because the disclosure that matters to a Californian is the state filing above. Our [BOI report page](#) covers what California trusts and LLCs owe now.

## Does a Wyoming or Nevada LLC protect your assets in a California lawsuit?

Not reliably: Wyoming and Nevada make the charging order a creditor's exclusive remedy and bar foreclosure, but California's statute lets a court "foreclose the lien and order the sale of the transferable interest," and no published California appellate decision says a California court must apply the Wyoming or Nevada rule instead.

Wyoming's statute says the charging order is the exclusive remedy "including any judgment debtor who may be the sole member," and that foreclosure isn't available. Nevada's says much the same. California's rule is different (Corp. Code § 17705.03). California law does let the formation state govern an LLC's internal affairs and a member's liability for the LLC's debts (Corp. Code § 17708.01), but a creditor collecting your personal debt from your LLC interest isn't trying to hold you liable for the LLC's debts. Neither the statute nor any published California case we found settles which state's charging-order rule a California court applies. Don't bet your house on it.

In *Curci v. Baldwin* (2017) 14 Cal.App.5th 214, the creditor held a judgment of about \$7.2 million and had collected nothing through a charging order on a Delaware LLC, even though the LLC "distribute[d] approximately \$178 million" to the debtor and his wife between 2006 and 2012. The court of appeal held that California law allows reverse veil piercing, "a means of reaching the LLC's assets, not the debtor's transferable interest." In *Blizzard Energy, Inc. v. Schaefer*s (2021) 71 Cal.App.5th 832, after a \$3.825 million Kansas fraud verdict, a California court added the debtor's LLC, which held land near Cambria, as a judgment debtor on an alter ego finding the court of appeal upheld. Courts elsewhere have refused charging-order protection for single-member LLCs entirely: Florida's Supreme Court in *Olmstead v. FTC* (2010) and a Colorado bankruptcy court in *In re Albright* (2003), which said the limit "serves no purpose in a single member limited liability company."



| Tool                 | What it does                                                                         | Authority                 |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Judgment debtor exam | You answer questions under oath about what you own, on pain of arrest if you skip it | Code Civ. Proc. § 708.110 |

| Tool                           | What it does                                                                         | Authority                                  |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Third-party exam               | Anyone holding more than \$250 of your property, including your LLC, can be examined | Code Civ. Proc. § 708.120                  |
| Charging order and foreclosure | Liens your LLC interest; the court can order it sold                                 | Corp. Code § 17705.03(b)(3)                |
| Reverse veil piercing          | Reaches the LLC's own assets when it's your alter ego                                | Curci v. Baldwin (2017) 14 Cal.App.5th 214 |
| Voidable transfer              | Undoes transfers made to hinder creditors, up to 7 years back                        | Civ. Code §§ 3439.04, 3439.09              |

---

## Can you move assets into an LLC after you're sued?

You can, and a court can undo it: under California's Uniform Voidable Transactions Act, a transfer made to hinder, delay or defraud creditors is voidable "whether the creditor's claim arose before or after the transfer was made" (Civ. Code § 3439.04).

The statute lists signs of fraudulent intent, and the anonymous-LLC playbook hits several: a transfer to an insider, keeping control of the property after the transfer, and a transfer made after you'd "been sued or threatened with suit." The remedy is to avoid the transfer and, after judgment, levy on the asset as if it never moved (Civ. Code § 3439.07). The creditor generally has four years, or one year after discovering the transfer if later, and the outside limit is seven years (Civ. Code § 3439.09). Moving assets after a problem appears is the version that fails; our [asset protection guide](#) explains what holds up.

---

## Have regulators gone after "asset protection" sellers?

Yes: the FTC banned one in 2007, and the Justice Department has obtained injunctions against promoters who used nominee entities to hide clients' assets.

Besides the Nevada-corporation case described above, the Justice Department in 2009 permanently enjoined the founder of a Utah "asset-protection business" from helping customers file fraudulent liens and set up hidden nominee bank accounts. In another 2009 civil suit in Florida, the government alleged that customers of a husband-and-wife "asset protection" business funneled about \$28 million through the scheme, causing an estimated \$4.3 million tax loss; those are allegations from the complaint.

---

## When does an out-of-state LLC make sense?

When the business really operates in that state and isn't managed from California, or when you hold a passive minority stake with no control, as in Swart.

A Californian who owns rental property in Nevada and manages it through a local company still has to watch the Paul example in Publication 3556. If you live here and run it from here, expect to pay California's tax and register here. For California rentals, see [whether your California rental property should be in an LLC](#); for the home you live in, see [why your house doesn't belong in an LLC](#).

## What should you do instead?

### 1 Form the LLC where you live and work

If you need an LLC for a real business or rental, a California LLC costs less than a Wyoming or Nevada LLC registered here and avoids the registration traps.

### 2 Insure first

Liability coverage and an umbrella policy pay claims. An LLC only changes who the claim is against.

### 3 Use the protections California already gives you

The [homestead exemption](#) protects home equity, and retirement accounts have their own protections.

### 4 Plan before there's a claim

Transfers made after you've been sued or threatened are the ones courts undo.

| Promise                                | What happens to a Californian                                            | Authority                                       |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| No California tax                      | \$800 a year once it's doing business here, registered or not            | Rev. & Tax. Code §§ 17941, 23101; FTB Pub. 3556 |
| Your name stays private                | Registered foreign LLCs publicly list managers or members                | Corp. Code § 17702.09                           |
| Skip registration                      | Can't sue in California; \$2,000 yearly penalty after demand; forfeiture | Corp. Code § 17708.07; Rev. & Tax. Code § 19135 |
| Charging order is the only remedy      | California allows foreclosure; choice of law unsettled                   | Corp. Code § 17705.03                           |
| Creditors can't reach the LLC's assets | Reverse veil piercing and alter ego findings reach them                  | Curci (2017); Blizzard Energy (2021)            |
| Move assets in when trouble starts     | Voidable for up to 7 years                                               | Civ. Code §§ 3439.04, 3439.09                   |

## Frequently asked questions

### Can a California resident use a Wyoming LLC?

Yes, but if you manage it from California it's doing business here, so it owes the \$800 California tax and has to register with the Secretary of State.

## Do I have to pay California's \$800 tax on a Wyoming or Nevada LLC?

If it's doing business in California or registered here, yes. The tax applies to LLCs formed under the law of "any other state."

## Is a Wyoming LLC anonymous?

Its Wyoming filings may not show your name, but its California statement of information will once it registers here, and a judgment creditor can make you disclose everything under oath.

## Do I need to file a BOI report for my LLC in 2026?

Not for a U.S. company. FinCEN's final rule, effective August 14, 2026, keeps the exemption for domestic companies.

## Are anonymous LLCs illegal?

No. Using one to conceal who controls a business in furtherance of unlawful conduct, or to hide assets from creditors or the IRS, is where people get into trouble.

## What is a charging order?

A court order that gives a member's creditor a lien on the member's share of LLC distributions. In California, if distributions won't pay the judgment in a reasonable time, the court can order the interest sold.

This page is general information about the law as of its update date. It isn't legal, tax, or investment advice for your situation, and reading it doesn't create an attorney-client relationship.

More myths from social media, checked against the actual rules: [the money myths series](#).

---

## SOURCES

- [Wyoming Secretary of State, Business Division Filing Fee Schedule Effective July 1st, 2026 \(Revised June 2026\)](#) (2026-06)
- [Nevada Legislature, NRS 86.561\(1\)\(a\)](#) ()
- [Nevada Legislature, NRS 76.100](#) ()
- [California Secretary of State, Forms, Samples and Fees: Foreign LLCs](#) ()
- [Federal Trade Commission, Las Vegas Company, Businessman Banned from Selling Business Ventures and Asset Protection Goods and Services](#) (2007-10-30)
- [U.S. Department of Justice, Tax Division, Complaint, United States v. William S. Reed, No. 4:07-cv-01471 \(E.D. Mo. filed Aug. 20, 2007\)](#) (2007-08-20)
- [Franchise Tax Board, FTB Pub. 3556](#) ()
- [California Legislature, Rev. & Tax. Code § 23101\(a\)](#) ()
- [California Legislature, Rev. & Tax. Code § 17941\(a\)](#) (eff. 2026-07-13 (per DingDuff))
- [Franchise Tax Board, Limited liability company \(LLC\)](#) ()
- [California Legislature, Corp. Code § 17708.07\(a\)](#) (eff. 2016-01-01)
- [California Legislature, Rev. & Tax. Code § 19135\(a\)](#) (eff. 2013-01-01)
- [Cal. Court of Appeal, 5th Dist., Swart Enterprises, Inc. v. Franchise Tax Bd. \(2017\) 7 Cal.App.5th 497](#) (2017-01-12)

- [California Legislature, Corp. Code § 17702.09\(a\)\(5\)](#) (eff. 2023-01-01)
- [California Secretary of State, Form LLC-12 instructions \(Rev 12/2022\)](#) (2022-12)
- [California Legislature, Code Civ. Proc. § 708.110\(e\)](#) (eff. 2024-01-01)
- [California Legislature, Code Civ. Proc. § 708.120\(a\)](#) (eff. 1996-01-01)
- [FinCEN, 91 FR 52508](#) (2026-08-14)
- [FinCEN, Beneficial Ownership Information Reporting \(fincen.gov/boi\)](#) (updated 2026-08-11)
- [FinCEN, Beneficial Ownership Information Reporting Requirement Revision and Deadline Extension, 90 FR 13688](#) (2025-03-26)
- [FinCEN, Residential Real Estate Rule \(fincen.gov/rre\)](#) ( )
- [Wyoming Legislature, W.S. 17-29-503\(g\)](#) ( )
- [California Legislature, Corp. Code § 17705.03\(b\)\(3\)](#) (eff. 2013-01-01)
- [California Legislature, Corp. Code § 17708.01\(a\)](#) (eff. 2013-01-01)
- [Cal. Court of Appeal, Curci v. Baldwin](#) (2017-08-10)
- [Cal. Court of Appeal, 2d Dist., Blizzard Energy, Inc. v. Schaefer](#) (2021) 71 Cal.App.5th 832 (2021-11-18)
- [Supreme Court of Florida, Olmstead v. FTC, 44 So.3d 76 \(Fla. 2010\)](#) (2010-06-24)
- [U.S. Bankruptcy Court, D. Colo., In re Albright, 291 B.R. 538 \(Bankr. D. Colo. 2003\)](#) (2003-04-04)
- [California Legislature, Civ. Code § 3439.04\(a\)\(1\)](#) (eff. 2016-01-01)
- [California Legislature, Civ. Code § 3439.07\(a\)\(1\)](#) (eff. 2016-01-01)
- [California Legislature, Civ. Code § 3439.09\(a\)](#) (eff. 2016-01-01)
- [U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Court Permanently Bars Utah Man from Promoting 'Asset Protection' Scheme](#) (2009-10-16)
- [U.S. Department of Justice, Justice Department Seeks to Bar Couple's 'Asset-protection' Scheme](#) (2009-08-05)

## Questions about your own plan?

Ridley Law helps California families with trusts, wills, trust administration and probate from Port Hueneme, serving Ventura, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles counties. The first call is free and runs 30 minutes.

[ridleylawoffices.com](http://ridleylawoffices.com) • (805) 244-5291

General information, not legal, tax or investment advice for your situation. Reading this guide does not create an attorney-client relationship. Ridley Law does not sell insurance or investments. You may share this PDF freely in unaltered form.