

Department of Planning and Budget
2026 General Assembly Session
State Fiscal Impact Statement

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ORIGINAL

Bill Number: HB217

Patron: Helmer

Bill Title: Importation, sale, manufacture, etc., of assault firearms and certain ammunition feeding devices prohibited; penalties.

Bill Summary: Creates a Class 1 misdemeanor for any person who imports, sells, manufactures, purchases, or transfers an assault firearm, as that term is defined in the bill with some exceptions, and prohibits a person who has been convicted of such violation from purchasing, possessing, or transporting a firearm for a period of three years from the date of conviction. The bill provides that an assault firearm does not include any firearm that is an antique firearm, has been rendered permanently inoperable, is manually operated by bolt, pump, lever, or slide action, or was manufactured before July 1, 2026. The bill also prohibits the sale of a large capacity ammunition feeding device, as that term is defined in the bill. The bill provides that any person who willfully and intentionally (i) sells an assault firearm to another person or (ii) purchases an assault firearm from another person is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor and that any person who imports, sells, barters, or transfers a large capacity ammunition feeding device is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. The bill also makes it a Class 1 misdemeanor for any person younger than 21 years of age to import, sell, manufacture, purchase, possess, transport, or transfer an assault firearm regardless of the date of manufacture of such assault firearm with some exceptions.

Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes

Items Impacted: Item 390

Explanation: See below

Fiscal Summary:

Proposal requires minimum “Woodrum” impact funding per § 30-19.1:4, Code of Virginia, to account for a possible increase in the need for state prison beds due to this legislation.

General Fund Expenditure Impact:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>FY2026</u>	<u>FY2027</u>	<u>FY2028</u>	<u>FY2029</u>	<u>FY2030</u>	<u>FY2031</u>
Dept. of Corrections		\$50,000				
TOTAL		\$50,000				

Fiscal Analysis:

Anyone convicted of a Class 1 misdemeanor is subject to a sentence of up to 12 months in jail and a fine of not more than \$2,500, either or both. Individuals convicted of certain Class 1 misdemeanor firearm offenses who accumulate three or more such convictions may be found guilty of a Class 6 felony, which could result in

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prison time. Therefore, this proposal could result in an increase in the number of persons sentenced to jail or prison.

There is not enough information available to reliably estimate the increase in jail population as a result of this proposal. However, any increase in jail population will increase costs to the state. The Commonwealth currently pays the localities \$5.00 a day for each misdemeanor or otherwise local-responsible prisoner held in a jail and \$15.00 a day for each state-responsible prisoner. It also funds a considerable portion of the jails' operating costs, e.g., correctional officers. The state's share of these costs on a per prisoner, per day basis varies from locality to locality. However, according to the Compensation Board's most recent Jail Cost Report (November 2025), the estimated total state support for local jails averaged \$58.25 per inmate, per day in FY 2024.

Due to the lack of data, the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission has concluded, pursuant to §30-19.1:4 of the Code of Virginia, that the impact of the proposed legislation on state-responsible (prison) bed space cannot be determined. In such cases, Chapter 725, 2025 Acts of Assembly, requires that a minimum impact of \$50,000 be assigned to the bill.

Other: None