

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

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REVISED

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:

This proposal creates several new Class 1 misdemeanors. 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

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may be found guilty of a Class 6 felon. Anyone convicted of a Class 6 felony is subject to a term of imprisonment of not less than one year nor more than five years, or in the discretion of the jury or the court trying the case without a jury, confinement in jail for not more than 12 months and a fine of not more than \$2,500, either or both. Therefore, this proposal could result in an increase in the number of persons sentenced to jail or prison.

The proposal would also expand the potential applicability of several existing felony offenses. Under § 18.2-308.2:2(K), making a materially false statement on a consent form that is required to purchase a firearm from a licensed dealer is a Class 5 felony. Anyone convicted of a Class 5 felony is subject to a term of imprisonment of not less than one year nor more than 10 years, or in the discretion of the jury or the court trying the case without a jury, confinement in jail for not more than 12 months and a fine of not more than \$2,500, either or both.

Under § 18.2-308.2:2(L), it is a Class 6 felony for any firearms dealer to willfully and intentionally sell, rent, trade, or transfer a firearm in violation of this section. Per § 18.2-308.2:2(L1), any person who attempts to solicit or entice a dealer to transfer a firearm other than to the actual buyer is guilty of a Class 6 felony. Pursuant to § 18.2-308.2:2(M), purchasing a firearm with the intent to transfer it to an individual who is ineligible to purchase a firearm from a dealer is a Class 4 felony that carries a mandatory minimum term of one year. Anyone convicted of a Class 4 felony is subject to a term of imprisonment of not less than two years nor more than 10 years and a fine of not more than \$100,000. Offenders who transfer more than one firearm in violation of § 18.2-308.2:2(M) are subject to a mandatory minimum term of five years. Subsection N of § 18.2-308.2:2 makes it a Class 4 felony for any person ineligible to purchase or possess a firearm to solicit, employ, or assist any person in purchasing a firearm in violation of § 18.2-308.2:2(M); a violation of this subsection also carries a mandatory minimum term of five years.

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.

Per the Virginia State Police, this proposal's changes to the criminal history record check required for purchasing a firearm from a licensed dealer will not have a fiscal impact on agency operations.

Other: Companion to SB749.