

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

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ORIGINAL

Bill Number: HB626 **Patron:** Callsen
Bill Title: Carrying a firearm or explosive material within Capitol Square or building owned or leased by the Commonwealth; exemptions; public institutions of higher education; penalty.

Bill Summary: Limits the exemption from the prohibition on the carrying of any firearm or explosive material within any building owned or leased by the Commonwealth or agency thereof or any office where employees of the Commonwealth or any agency thereof are regularly present for the purpose of performing their official duties that currently applies to any property owned or operated by a public institution of higher education to instead apply to any individual within a building owned or operated by a public institution of higher education who possesses a weapon as part of such public institution of higher education's curriculum or activities or as part of any organization authorized by such public institution of higher education to conduct its programs or activities within such building, as such uses are approved through the law-enforcement or public safety unit of such institution.

Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes **Items Impacted:** Item 390
Explanation: This bill may increase the prison population. The Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission (VCSC) has concluded an impact on prison bed space cannot be determined, therefore, Chapter 725, 2025 Acts of Assembly, requires a minimum impact of \$50,000 be assigned to the bill.

Fiscal Summary: This bill could increase the prison population by expanding the scope of a Class 1 misdemeanor. Offenders convicted of three or more Class 1 misdemeanors who accumulate three or more weapon convictions may be found guilty of a Class 6 felony. As a result, this bill could lead to an increase in the number of persons sentenced to jail or prison. VCSC has concluded that an impact on prison bed space cannot be determined, therefore, Chapter 725, 2025 Acts of Assembly, requires a minimum impact of \$50,000 be assigned to the bill.

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>
Department of Corrections		\$50,000				
TOTAL		\$50,000				

Fiscal Analysis: The bill authorizes additional restrictions to possess weapons at a public institution of higher education, therefore, it expands the applicability of the existing Class 1 misdemeanor. Additionally, offenders that a that are convicted three or more Class 1 misdemeanors who accumulate three or more weapon convictions could be found guilty of a Class 6 felony.

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

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.

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 localities \$5.00 a day for each misdemeanor or otherwise local-responsible prisoner held in a jail. It also funds a large 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.

For someone convicted of a Class 6 felony, a judge has the option of sentencing the offender 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.

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: SB272 is a companion bill. This bill is identical to SB383 from the 2024 session.