

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

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ORIGINAL

Bill Number: SB643S1

Patron: Surovell

Bill Title: Firearm purchase requirements; penalties.

Bill Summary: The substitute bill requires any person selling a firearm to obtain verification from the Department of State Police that the prospective purchaser is not prohibited under state or federal law or a criminal history record check from possessing a firearm. The bill requires any person purchasing a handgun firearm from a firearms dealer to present a valid firearm purchaser license issued by the Department of State Police that allows the holder to purchase a handgun firearm. The bill prohibits a firearms dealer from selling, renting, trading, or transferring from his inventory any firearm to any person until he has received such permit. The substitute bill provides that no dealer shall require a prospective purchaser to show a valid firearm purchaser license if such prospective purchaser is renting a firearm from the dealer solely for the purpose of engaging in lawful recreational shooting activities at an established shooting range. The bill sets forth the procedures to apply for the permit and prohibits the permitting of any person who (i) is younger than 21 years of age; (ii) is prohibited from purchasing, possessing, or transporting a firearm; ; or (iii) within the two years prior to the date of application, has not completed a firearms safety or training course or class offered to the public by a law-enforcement agency, institution of higher education, or private or public institution or organization or by a firearms training school utilizing instructors certified or approved by the Department of Criminal Justice Services and with a required curriculum, detailed in the bill. The provisions of subdivision 3 shall not apply to any person who (i) is a current law-enforcement officer; (ii) retired in good standing from a federal, state, or local law-enforcement agency who has obtained a concealed handgun permit with ongoing qualification; or (iii) is an active duty member of the military who is 21 years of age or older. The bill provides that such firearm purchaser license is valid for five years from the date of issuance.

The substitute bill details reasons for revocation of a firearm purchaser license. The bill also states that any person who makes a materially false statement on the application form for a permit is guilty of perjury. The bill provides that the Department of State Police shall enter the name and description of a person issued a firearm purchaser license into the Virginia Criminal Information Network and specifies that such information will be withheld from public disclosure but shall not be withheld from any law-enforcement agency or officer, or any authorized agent of such agency or officer, acting in the performance of his official duties.

Finally, the substitute bill provides that the Department of State Police shall keep and maintain a computerized database containing certain enumerated information, which may be made available to institutions of higher education and other research organizations or institutions in the Commonwealth upon request and sets out exceptions for to whom its provisions should apply. An enactment clause in the substitute bill provides that the Department of State Police shall create a verification process for a seller of a firearm to contact the Department to obtain verification of a purchaser's firearm purchaser license.

The bill has an enactment date of July 1, 2028.

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Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes
Explanation: See below

Items Impacted: 390, 395, 415

Fiscal Summary: This proposal requires all persons who purchase a handgun to obtain a license issued by the Department of State Police (VSP). The fiscal impact on the Department of State Police (VSP), Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), and the Department of Corrections (DOC) is estimated to be up to \$12,032,957 in FY27 and up to \$14,448,449 in FY28. The fiscal impact on local law enforcement is indeterminate.

General Fund Expenditure Impact:

Agency	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	FY2031
Dept. of Corrections	\$0	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Dept. of State Police	\$0	Up to \$11,982,957	Up to \$13,895,299	Up to \$11,617,774	Up to \$11,585,553	Up to \$11,585,553
Dept. of Criminal Justice Services	\$0	\$0	\$553,150	\$1,146,350	\$1,146,350	\$1,146,350
TOTAL	\$0	Up to \$12,032,957	Up to \$14,448,449	Up to \$12,764,124	Up to \$12,731,903	Up to \$12,731,903

Position Impact:

Agency	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	FY2031
Dept. of State Police		Up to 7	Up to 42	Up to 43	Up to 43	Up to 43
Dept. of Criminal Justice Services			10	10	10	10
TOTAL	Up to 7	Up to 52	Up to 53	Up to 53	Up to 53	Up to 53

Fiscal Analysis:

Department of State Police Impact:

This proposal requires all persons who purchase a firearm to obtain a license issued by the Department of State Police (VSP). According to VSP, there were approximately 300,000 individual purchasers for handguns over the last calendar year, roughly 25,000 per month. Based on the anticipated workflow and processes, VSP anticipates needing additional employees to receive the license applications, conduct data entry, process the background checks, research the applicant's suitability, and conduct out-processing of the license.

The applicant will be required to submit to a fingerprint-based state and national background check and VSP will conduct an additional investigation on the person's risk and suitability to purchase the firearm.

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The agency estimates it will need to hire up to 43 additional staff to meet the provisions of the bill. This includes up to:

Eight Program Support Technicians. The cost for one Program Support Technician is \$90,394 for salary and benefits.

Fifteen Senior Program Support Technicians. The cost of a Senior Program Support Technician is \$98,172 for salary and benefits.

Ten Fingerprint Technicians. The cost of the Fingerprint Technician is \$84,857 for salary and benefits.

Three agency management analysts to conduct additional follow up research and investigations as required by this bill. The cost for an analyst is \$106,219 for salary and benefits.

Two Office Services Specialists. The cost of the Office Services Specialist is \$86,105 for salary and benefits.

One Administrative Procedures Specialist. The cost of the Administrative Procedures Specialist is \$86,105 for salary and benefits.

One additional Human Resource (HR) analyst to accommodate the additional staff required to meet the provisions of this bill. The cost for the HR analyst is \$128,242 for salary and benefits.

One Firearms Transaction Center (FTC) manager to assist with the management of the section. The cost for the FTC Manager is \$146,645 for salary and benefits.

One additional Fiscal Accountant would be needed for the management of the background check fees associated with national fingerprint-based background checks. This position would cost \$100,648 for salary and benefits.

One additional Lieutenant to oversee the management of the division responsible for the firearms licenses. The cost for the Lieutenant is \$234,900 for salary and benefits.

VSP reports that an off-site facility would need to be acquired to accommodate these 43 new employees. The estimated rent cost for a year is estimated to be \$291,871, approximately \$6,788 per employee.

The cost for yearly IT expenses for employees is \$144,906, approximately \$3,370 per employee.

The one-time cost for IT equipment is \$43,060, approximately \$1,001 per employee.

The cost for furniture for the new employees is estimated to be a one-time cost of \$267,465, approximately 6,220 per employee.

Due to the potential increase in fingerprinting, the agency believes that additional LiveScans fingerprinting machines would be needed. The cost for seven LiveScans machines totals \$154,000.

This Bill also requires VSP to provide and maintain a searchable database (a “Hotfile”) of the licenses for purchases, accessible to criminal justice agencies via the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN).

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Modifications to the VCHECK2 background check system used by the Department's Firearms Transactions Center will be required to issue and track the licenses, routinely monitor existing licenses in Rap Back for disqualifying events such as criminal convictions or mental health commitments, and interface with the Department's biometrics system to identify criminal history records based on fingerprints. According to the agency, the information technology reconfiguration and development cost is estimated to be \$20,785,600, split over FY 2027 and FY 2028, with ongoing operations and maintenance cost of \$6,271,800 in FY 2029 and each year after.

There are also costs associated with printing the license cards and mailing them to the applicant. The equipment and material costs for printing and mailing the licenses are estimated to be \$670,250 the first year and \$645,250 the second year. Due to the new processes and workload, VSP indicates it would also need up to nine contractors to assist with the set-up of this process and program. The contractors are expected to cost \$399,955 each year

Since the bill has a delayed enactment, most of the personnel costs will not be realized until FY 2028 and FY 2029.

The costs included in FY 2027 are half of the IT development costs of VCHECK2, seven positions (Lieutenant, FTC Manager, HR Analyst, one Procedures Specialists, three Management Analysts) that include salary, fringe, IT, and furniture costs, additional LiveScan machines procurement, and contractors.

The costs included in FY 2028 are half of the IT development costs for VCHECK2, positions funded in FY 2027 (and their associated costs), positions prorated for six months (such as technicians, office specialists, program support technicians), six month prorated printing machine costs, and contractors.

The costs in FY 2029 through FY 2031 do not include the cost of the contractors, but do include the additional accountant, ongoing IT costs for VCHECK2, full card printing costs and mailing costs.

The bill's requirement for an additional investigation on a person's risk and suitability to purchase a firearm will increase the workload for local law enforcement agencies as VSP will need to contact the locality in which the purchaser resides. The cost for local law enforcement agencies is indeterminate.

Department of Criminal Justice Services Impact:

This legislation would require prospective firearm purchasers hold a valid firearm purchaser license issued by VSP. In order to obtain the purchaser license, an applicant must complete a firearms safety or training course approved by the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and offered by a law-enforcement agency, institution of higher education, or private or public institution or organization or by a firearms training school utilizing instructors that are certified or approved by DCJS.

The curriculum would be required to include (1) instruction regarding knowledge, safe handling, and storage of firearms and ammunition; (2) instruction regarding safe firearms shooting fundamentals that shall include live fire shooting exercises conducted on a range with the expenditure of a minimum of 10 rounds of ammunition; (3) identification of ways to develop and maintain firearm shooting skills; (4) instruction

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regarding federal and state laws pertaining to the lawful purchase, ownership, transportation, use, and possession of firearms; and (5) instruction regarding the laws pertaining to the use of deadly force for self-defense and techniques for avoiding a criminal attack and how to manage a violent confrontation, including conflict resolution.

DCJS's Division of Licensure and Regulatory Services (LRS) currently does not certify firearms training schools, but the division does certify private security services (PSS) training schools and PSS instructors and schools utilizing certified PSS instructors that may and do teach firearms-related courses. Current DCJS-approved curricula, such as the 07E Entry-Level Handgun Training, cover some of the topics required by the legislation but not all. Therefore, new curricula would have to be researched and developed. To accommodate this new mandate, DCJS anticipates the need to create a new Public Firearm Safety Program housed within LRS.

In order for the proposed Public Firearm Safety Program to carry out the responsibilities outlined in this bill, DCJS estimates the need for four regional investigators to audit, inspect, and respond to complaints regarding instructors and schools. The estimated salary for these positions is based on region. The Northern Virginia investigator position would have an annual salary of \$86,000, with a total annual cost of \$124,700 including benefits. The Richmond, Southwest Virginia, and Tidewater investigator positions would each have an annual salary of \$81,000, with a total annual cost of \$117,450 per position, including benefits.

DCJS also estimates the need for one adjudication specialist to adjudicate in response to findings by the investigator per existing LRS policy and the Administrative Process Ac., with an annual salary of \$91,000, and a total annual cost of \$131,950 including benefits; one trainer and instructor to develop new training curricula that fulfill the firearm competency requirements outlined in this bill, as well as review and maintain training curricula, with an annual salary of \$84,000, and a total annual cost of \$121,800 including benefits; and one supervisor to manage the efforts of the aforementioned and to step in during times of absence or issues requiring escalation, with an annual salary of \$91,000, and a total annual cost of \$131,950 including fringe benefits.

Lastly, DCJS anticipates the need for three customer service specialists to answer inquiries and provide assistance to the expanded group of stakeholders. These positions would each have an annual salary of \$56,000, with a total annual cost of \$81,200 per position, including benefits.

Total DCJS personnel expenses for these ten positions, including fringe benefits, would be approximately \$1,106,350 annually.

DCJS also anticipates \$40,000 for ongoing travel costs including six vehicle leases to conduct audits, inspections, and investigations, bringing total DCJS annual costs to \$1,146,350.

The fiscal impact estimate provided above is based on a scenario where DCJS would develop and maintain one standardized training course to be delivered by all firearms safety training entities across the Commonwealth. However, if DCJS is required to review and approve individual firearms safety courses/classes developed by any organizations or private individuals, it would greatly increase the staffing level needed. DCJS anticipates the need for an additional three regional investigators, an additional two trainers and instructors, and an

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additional three customer service specialists under that scenario. Total estimated personnel expenses would increase from \$1,106,350 to \$1,945,900, an increase of \$839,550.

The bill has a delayed enactment clause with an effective date of July 1, 2028. However, in order to be prepared for a July 1, 2028, start date, DCJS would need the new FTE's and half of the annualized new funding to hire staff beginning January 1, 2028.

Woodrum Impact:

The proposal expands the potential applicability of existing felony offenses associated with materially false statements on applications, willfully and intentionally selling, renting, trading or transferring a firearm in violation of this legislation, buying a firearm for transfer to an ineligible buyer and other provisions that could result in an increase of inmates to local jails or the state correctional system .

The proposal also amends the applicability of an existing Class 1 misdemeanor that could result in more individuals being sentenced to local jails.

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, which would require a budget amendment under the Department of Corrections.

Finally, the legislation allows individuals not approved for a firearm purchaser license to petition a circuit court to challenge this finding. It is not known how many individuals might not be approved for a firearm purchaser license or how many of those individuals would ask a circuit court to overrule the finding; thus, any costs to the court system from an increase in cases due to this legislation is indeterminate.

Other: HB1359H1 is similar to this proposal.