

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

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ORIGINAL

Bill Number: SB727S2

Patron: Jones, M.

Bill Title: Carrying loaded firearms in public areas prohibited in the Commonwealth; penalty.

Bill Summary: The substitute bill prohibits the carrying of certain semiautomatic center-fire rifles and shotguns and other firearms modified to be operable as an assault firearm in any public place. The substitute bill provides an expanded list of firearms, whether loaded or unloaded, to which the prohibition applies. It specifies that the bill applies to semi-automatic center-fire rifles with a fixed magazine capacity in excess of 15 rounds. The substitute bill would exempt any person who may lawfully possess such a firearm while in a personal, private motor vehicle or vessel and such firearm is secured in a container or compartment. The proposal specifies that any member of a cadet corps who is recognized by a public institution of higher education would be exempted from the prohibition if such member is in the performance of sanctioned military training or is participating in an official ceremonial event for the Commonwealth. However, the proposal also specifies that law-enforcement officers would not be exempted from the prohibition when they are not engaged in the performance of their lawful duties. Lastly, the proposal also removes the exemptions for licensed security guards, persons with valid concealed handgun permits, and any retired law-enforcement officer pursuant to § 18.2-308.016 provided in current Code.

Currently, under § 18.2-287.4, it is a Class 1 misdemeanor for a person to carry a loaded semi-automatic firearm with specified features and equipped with a magazine that holds more than 20 rounds, or a shotgun with a magazine that will hold more than seven rounds, in public areas in the cities of Alexandria, Chesapeake, Fairfax, Falls Church, Newport News, Norfolk, Richmond, or Virginia Beach or in the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Henrico, Loudoun, or Prince William. The proposal would expand this provision to prohibit possession of these types of firearms in public places in any locality.

The proposal expands an existing Class 1 misdemeanor to include additional types of firearms, places, and circumstances. Pursuant to § 18.2-311.2, a third or subsequent Class 1 misdemeanor weapon violation (defined in Article 4, 5, 6, or 7 of Chapter 7 of Title 18.2) is punishable as a Class 6 felony.

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.

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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 expands an existing Class 1 misdemeanor to include additional places and circumstances. Pursuant to § 18.2-311.2, a third or subsequent Class 1 misdemeanor weapon violation (defined in Article 4, 5, 6, or 7 of Chapter 7 of Title 18.2) is punishable as a Class 6 felony. 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. 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

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 misdemeanant 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.

According to the Virginia State Police, this proposal is not expected to have an impact on agency operations. Any unanticipated costs that may arise from the bill are expected to be covered with existing resources.

Other: Companion to HB1524.