

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

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ORIGINAL

Bill Number: HB1525ER

Patron: McGuire

Bill Title: Purchase, possession, or transportation of certain firearms by persons younger than 21 years of age; penalty.

Bill Summary: The enrolled bill prohibits persons younger than 21 years of age from purchasing, possessing, or transporting handguns or assault firearms anywhere in the Commonwealth. Current law prohibits persons younger than 18 years of age from possessing or transporting handguns or assault firearms. The bill contains certain exceptions, including those under 21 who are engaged in official training as a law enforcement officer or member of the US Armed Forces or National Guard. The enrolled bill adds exceptions for cadets in Corps of Cadets or the Reserve Officers' Training Corps at a public institution of higher education and active participants in a Trooper Basic Academy Session administered by the Virginia State Police.

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. The proposal also requires changes to the Department of State Police's VCHECK2 background check system at a cost of \$39,800.

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				
Dept. of State Police		\$39,800				
TOTAL		\$89,800				

Fiscal Analysis:

Under current law, it is a Class 1 misdemeanor for any person under 18 years of age to possess or transport a handgun or assault firearm in the Commonwealth. Exceptions apply when the person is in their home or on their own property; on the property of a parent, grandparent, or legal guardian; or on the property of another person with the property owner's prior permission and the consent of a parent or legal guardian. Additional exceptions include possession or transportation while traveling to or participating in a shooting range or firearms education class, while engaged in hunting or traveling to a hunting area, or while performing official duties as a member of the United States Armed Forces or the National Guard. The proposal expands § 18.2-

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308.7 to prohibit any person under 21 years of age from purchasing a handgun or assault firearm anywhere within the Commonwealth. A third or subsequent violation under § 18.2-311.2, including a violation of this provision, 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 7, 2026 Acts of Assembly, requires that a minimum impact of \$50,000 be assigned to the bill.

According to the Department of State Police (VSP), modifications to the VCHECK2 background check system used by the Department's Firearms Transactions Center will be required to reflect the language in the bill. The estimated cost is \$39,800.

Other: House Amendment Item 390 #1h provides one-time funding of \$50,000 to DOC in general funds in FY2027 for this bill. VSP confirmed the \$51,288 of funding for background check updates provided in Senate amendment Item 415 #1 will cover the updates needed for SB643 and HB1525. SB643 is similar to HB1525.