

Date of Hearing: April 8, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1615 (Nguyen) – As Introduced January 21, 2026

Policy Committee: Public Safety Vote: 9 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill authorizes a peace officer employed by a county probation department to use an off-roster handgun as a service weapon if the county probation employee has satisfied defined training requirements.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

This bill would result in one-time costs to the Department of Justice (DOJ) of approximately \$400,000 or less, likely from the General Fund, because existing special fund resources are insufficient to cover implementation. Although the workload would ordinarily be funded through the Dealers' Record of Sale (DROS) Account, DOJ indicates that current revenues in that account are inadequate to absorb the new costs associated with the bill. As a result, implementation would require a General Fund appropriation, and DOJ states it cannot implement the bill within existing budgeted resources.

The costs are primarily related to information technology modifications and limited staff workload needed to implement a new statutory exemption in firearms databases and reporting systems. DOJ's California Justice Information Services Division anticipates contracting for short-term consultants—including a systems analyst, developer, and quality assurance specialist—to update multiple systems such as CFARS, AFS, DROS, and related databases and reporting tools. Additional overtime workload within the Bureau of Firearms would be required to develop business and functional requirements, conduct testing, update training materials, and revise system workflows. DOJ also anticipates a small amount of consultant time for a Deputy Attorney General to assist during the requirements phase. Overall, these activities generate minor one-time implementation costs but require General Fund support due to insufficient DROS revenues.

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

**COMMENTS:**

California law generally prohibits the manufacture, sale, or transfer of handguns unless the specific model has been tested and certified by the Department of Justice (DOJ). Under the state's "Unsafe Handgun Act," a handgun may be sold in California only if it satisfies specified safety requirements and is listed on the DOJ's roster of certified handguns. These requirements include the presence of a specified safety mechanism, successful completion of firing reliability

testing, and passing drop-safety testing designed to ensure the firearm does not discharge if dropped. DOJ places handgun models that meet these criteria on the roster and such handguns may be sold to the public, subject to other firearm purchase restrictions. Handguns that have not undergone certification—commonly referred to as “off-roster” or “unsafe” handguns—generally may not be sold in California.

Existing law, however, provides several exemptions for law enforcement agencies and peace officers, allowing them to purchase off-roster handguns that are otherwise unavailable to the general public. Historically, these exemptions have allowed officers to obtain and use such firearms as service weapons if they meet specified training and qualification standards. County probation officers, like other peace officers, complete Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) firearms modules and POST-style training, including regular live-fire qualification tests, before they are authorized to carry a firearm.

This bill clarifies that a peace officer employed by a county probation department may use an off-roster handgun as a service weapon if the officer has completed the required firearms training and continues to meet qualification standards. According to the Public Safety Committee’s analysis of this measure, county probation officers were inadvertently excluded from the roster exemption framework during earlier statutory revisions, even though similarly situated law enforcement personnel retained access to these firearms. This bill would correct that inconsistency by restoring county probation officers’ ability to use off-roster handguns for official duties under the same training and qualification conditions that apply to other peace officers.

**Analysis Prepared by:** Shiran Zohar / APPR. / (916) 319-2081