

Date of Hearing: March 18, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Darshana R. Patel, Chair

AB 1943 (Gipson) – As Amended March 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Pupil safety: notifications: firearms

SUMMARY: Requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to develop a Secure Firearm Storage Notification which the CDE and local educational agencies (LEAs) would then distribute to the parents and guardians of enrolled pupils through specified means. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the development and distribution of a Secure Firearm Storage Notification, which would include:
 - a) A description of the risks of children accessing unsecured firearms at home;
 - b) Information and resources regarding the importance of secure firearm storage for preventing youth from bringing firearms to school, as well as preventing youth suicide;
 - c) A plain-language summary of California’s child access prevention laws, beginning with the preventative requirement in Penal Code (PC) 25145; and
 - d) The website address of the Department of Justice’s Roster of Firearm Safety Devices Certified for Sale.
- 2) Requires the CDE to develop model language for the Secure Firearm Storage Notification by July 1, 2027, including formatting options appropriate for websites and social media, and share it annually with LEAs.
- 3) Requires LEAs to provide the Secure Firearm Storage Notification to parents or guardians of enrolled pupils through the following methods, commencing with the 2027-2028 school year:
 - a) Distribute the Notification in writing at the beginning of each school year, alongside the existing required firearm safety information;
 - b) Post the Notification on the LEA website and update it annually; and
 - c) Optionally, to share the information through social media accounts and other communications.
- 4) Requires the CDE to encourage LEAs to distribute the Secure Firearm Storage Notification under additional conditions:
 - a) When providing advance notice of armed assailant drills to parents and guardians of enrolled pupils;
 - b) When providing notice to parents or guardians of disciplinary action or support that has been given to a pupil following threats against other pupils or threats of self-harm;

- c) When school counselors distribute information about reducing access to lethal means to a pupil's family in the context of suicide prevention or reporting requirements related to pupil safety.
- 5) Repeals existing law made redundant by this bill, which instructs the CDE and LEAs on how to inform parents and guardians of firearm safety laws.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Requires all firearms, when not carried or controlled by the lawful authorized user, to be secured using a safety device or gun safe that is listed on the Department of Justice's roster of tested and approved gun safety devices. (PC 25145)
- 2) Makes it a crime to keep a handgun within a premises with knowledge that a child is likely to gain access, if the child obtains access to the handgun and carries it off premises. (PC 25200)
- 3) Requires LEAs to annually provide parents or guardians of enrolled pupils with information related to state laws on firearm storage and child access prevention, which is developed and updated by the department. Additionally establishes immunity from civil liability for LEAs, private schools, and the CDE for any damages arising out of these notifications. (EC 48986)
- 4) Requires LEAs to notify parents or guardians of enrolled pupils of numerous additional rights and responsibilities. (EC 48980)
- 5) Requires LEAs to maintain several resources on their public-facing websites. These include:
 - a) School policies on several topics (suicide prevention, harassment and discrimination, hate violence, cyber-bullying);
 - b) Information related to Title IX;
 - c) Links to resources maintained on the department website; and,
 - d) Resources related to neurodiversity. (EC 234.6)
- 6) Requires the CDE to develop and maintain several resources on their public-facing website, including best practices pertaining to school shooter or other armed assailant drills. (ED 32298.6)

FISCAL EFFECT: The Office of Legislative Counsel has keyed this bill as a possible state-mandated local program.

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. According to the author, "AB 1943 strengthens and modernizes California's school-based secure firearm storage notifications, so they reflect our updated legal standards and focus on the very real risks of unsecured firearms. Too often, tragedies involving children—whether school shootings, unintentional shootings, or youth suicide—are preventable. Research shows that simply locking and securing firearms can significantly reduce these devastating outcomes. AB 1943 ensures that information provided through our schools is not only updated, but more visible and actionable for parents and caregivers. By expanding how schools share

secure storage information, including posting it on district websites and digital platforms, we increase the likelihood that families will see and engage with these critical safety messages. Secure firearm storage is one of the most effective steps we can take to protect children and prevent avoidable tragedies. I introduced AB1943 because we know that secure firearm storage saves lives—and we must do more to ensure families have clear, accessible, and timely information about their responsibilities under the law.”

Firearms are a significant threat to the safety of California youth. Firearms are the 3rd leading cause of death for Californians under 18 (Center for Disease Control, 2023). Each year, an average of 264 children and teenagers die by guns in California (EveryTown, 2026). The majority (75%) of these deaths are homicides, followed by suicides (21%). Californian youth who had access to firearms were twice as likely to attempt suicide in 2022, and suicide attempts by firearms are highly fatal (UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, 2024). In incidents of school violence, national data from the Department of Homeland Security suggests that the majority of attackers acquire a firearm from the home of a parent or relative, nearly half of which are not securely stored (U.S. Secret Service, 2019).

Rates of gun ownership vary across the state, but a 2021 report by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research found that 5.2 million Californian adults kept a gun in their home (Banawa & Tan, 2022). Of these, 8% were stored loaded and unlocked. Multiple studies have shown that improper gun storage in a home significantly increases a child’s risk of homicide, suicide, and accidental death (Grossman et. al. 2005, Monuteaux et. al. 2019, Cannon et al 2023).

Secure gun laws in California. Currently, all firearms in California must be secured by a safety device or a gun safe that has been approved by the state Department of Justice (DOJ) when not actively controlled by the legally authorized user. When firearms are sold in California, they must be similarly accompanied by an approved safety device or proof that the purchaser already owns an approved safety device. Research has shown that child access prevention laws such as these can significantly reduce firearm deaths in children and teenagers (Cummings, 1997; Webster, 2004).

The California Department of Justice Office of the Attorney General maintains a website with a list of approved gun safety devices and gun storage safes that meet DOJ safety requirements. The site is easy to navigate and regularly updated; safety devices can be searched for by name or by compatibility with various firearms. Providing a link to this website in the Secure Firearm Notification, as recommended by this bill, may help parents and guardians access secure firearm storage devices. ***Staff recommends the bill be amended to*** ensure the URL link to this website remains active and unbroken each year the Notification is distributed.

Schools’ current role in promoting secure gun storage. In 2025, the Superintendent of Public Instruction released a letter entitled *Safe Storage of Firearms, School Safety and Security*, which urged county and district superintendents and charter school administrators to inform their school communities about state laws regarding safe gun storage. The letter was accompanied by template notifications, in English and Spanish, for schools to adapt and distribute as they see fit. In fact, this template already meets many – though not all – of the requirements for the Secure Firearm Notification created by this bill.

Currently, schools must notify parents at the beginning of each school year of the current laws regarding safe gun storage and child access prevention, although not in the detail specified by this bill. Some LEAs have chosen to take even greater action. For example, the Los Angeles

Unified School District Board of Education adopted a “Safe Gun Storage Measure” in June of 2019, requiring that a letter be sent home to parents and guardians in English and Spanish, to inform them about laws pertaining to safe gun storage. The measure also required parents to sign a letter each year acknowledging their understanding of their firearm storage responsibilities, and required schools to maintain these documents on file in a central location for three years.

How schools notify parents of information. Recent years have seen a rapid expansion in the number of items schools are required to inform parents of. Federal and state laws require schools to annually notify parents or guardians of more than 50 distinct items. These notifications include anti-discrimination laws, sun protection policies, school pesticide use, AIDS education, a prohibition on student laser pointers, and many other items. Although each cause is important, their cumulative effect may cause parents to skim over information rather than digest it carefully. Future legislation may wish to consider the utility of these lengthy annual notifications, whether parents and guardians are able to absorb all the information they contain, and which topics are truly the school’s responsibility to communicate.

Currently, individual school websites are required to include a much smaller number of items than what is included in the annual notifications. For the most part, the required items are school-specific policies on various topics. Many school websites include links to information hosted on the CDE website, which maintains a much larger collection of resources that are generally applicable to all students across the state. In order to keep school websites functional for local users, it is important to limit the amount of information they are required to host. ***Staff recommends amending the bill such that*** the Firearm Storage Notification is required to be appear on the CDE website, and recommend to appear on local LEA websites.

This bill also includes a recommendation that schools distribute the Secure Firearm Notification when parents are informed of other relevant actions taken by a school. These include planned school shooter drills; disciplinary actions following threats against other pupils; or support actions following threats of self-harm. Additionally, this bill recommends that school counselors receive the Notification as an example of information that can be distributed to parents during consultations regarding suicide prevention or threats against other students. To the extent that school notifications are likely more impactful when delivered in relevant context, these recommendations may help ensure that the Notification is regarded seriously when received by parents.

Arguments in support: Everytown for Gun Safety writes, “Ultimately, the goal of secure firearm storage notifications is not mere compliance with a statutory requirement to describe secure storage laws. Rather, the goal is that parents and caregivers review the information, think about whether there are un-secured guns in their home, and, where appropriate, become motivated and empowered to take action to reduce risk by properly securing gun(s). Notification content should be prepared with attention to that underlying goal.”

Related Legislation: SB 53 (Portantino), Chapter 542, Statutes of 2024, requires a person who possesses a firearm in a residence to keep the firearm securely stored when the firearm is not being carried or readily controlled, as specified, violation of which is punishable as an infraction or misdemeanor, as specified. The bill also removes exemptions to existing child access laws for individuals who have no reasonable expectation that a child is likely to be present on the premises.

SB 906 (Portantino), Chapter 144, Statutes of 2022, requires LEAs to annually provide information to parents or guardians about California's child access prevention laws and laws relating to the safe storage of firearms.

SB 452 (Friedman), Chapter 199, Statutes of 2022, requires LEAs to provide notification to parents of each student about California's child access prevention laws and laws relating to the safe storage of firearms, and requires the CDE to develop model language for this notification in consultation with the Department of Justice.

Recommended Committee Amendments. Staff recommends that the bill be amended as follows:

- 1) Recommend, rather than require, that all LEAs maintain the Secure Firearm Notification on individual school websites;***
- 2) Require the Secure Firearm Notification be maintained on the CDE website;***
- 3) Require the CDE to ensure that the URL link to the Department of Justices' Roster of Firearm Safety Devices Certified for Sale remains active and unbroken;***
- 4) Technical changes to clarify that the preventative requirements in Secure Firearm Notification begin specifically with subdivision (a) of Penal Code 25145.***

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund
Alameda County Office of Education
Giffords
Brady Campaign
Brady California

Opposition

None on file.

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