

SENATE THIRD READING  
SB 704 (Arreguín)  
As Amended September 02, 2025  
Majority vote

## SUMMARY

Prohibits the sale or transfer of a firearm barrel unless the transaction is completed in person by a licensed firearms dealer.

### Major Provisions

- 1) States that, commencing July 1, 2027, a firearm barrel shall not be sold or transferred unless that transaction is completed in person by a licensed firearm dealer, and the licensed firearm dealer has conducted an eligibility check to determine that the person is authorized to purchase a firearm, ammunition, and a firearm barrel in a manner prescribed by the California Department of Justice (DOJ).
- 2) Establishes that no person shall possess a firearm barrel with the intent to be sold or offered to be sold, as defined.
- 3) Provides that a person is authorized to purchase a firearm barrel if they are at least 18 years of age and are not prohibited from possessing, receiving, owning, or purchasing a firearm barrel under state or federal law.
- 4) Requires the licensed firearm dealer to legibly record all of the following information on a form to be prescribed by the DOJ pertaining to the sale or transfer of the firearm barrel:
  - a) The date of the sale or transfer;
  - b) The purchaser's or transferee's driver's license or other identification number and the state in which it was issued;
  - c) The make, model, and caliber of the firearm that the firearm barrel is designed for or used in;
  - d) The purchaser's or transferee's full name;
  - e) The name of the salesperson who processed the sale or transfer;
  - f) The purchaser's or transferee's full residential address and telephone number; and,
  - g) The purchaser's or transferee's date of birth.
- 5) Provides that, commencing July 1, 2027, a licensed firearms dealer shall electronically submit to the DOJ the information above for all sales and transfers of ownership of a firearm barrel.
- 6) Exempts the following from the process outlined above:
  - a) Federal, state and local law enforcement agencies;

- b) Federal firearms licensees;
  - c) The United States military;
  - d) A person purchasing a firearm and undergoing a state and federal firearm background check pursuant to existing law;
  - e) Sales or transfers to a person who, in the same transaction, is separately purchasing a firearm and undergoing a state and federal firearm background check, as defined;
  - f) Sales or transfers to a federally licensed collector who is acquiring or being loaned the barrel of a firearm that is a curio or relic, as defined, and who has a current certificate of eligibility issued by DOJ, as defined;
  - g) The sale or other transfer of ownership of a firearm barrel if the sale or other transfer of ownership is to an authorized representative of a city, city and county, county, or state government, or of the federal government, and the entity is acquiring the firearm barrel as part of an authorized, voluntary program in which the entity is buying or receiving weapons from private individuals. All such barrels shall be disposed of, as specified.
  - h) Transfers to or from the public administrator, public guardian, public conservator, the executor, personal representative, guardian, conservator, or administrator of an estate. Any transfers or sales from these persons to any third party other than law enforcement or a licensed firearms dealer shall be conducted by a licensed firearms dealer and is subject to the requirements of this section; and
  - i) A barrel that is attached to or affixed to a firearm.
- 7) Establishes that a first violation of the prohibition on the sale or transfer of a firearm barrel, as specified above, shall be punishable by up to six months in county jail, by a \$1,000 fine, or by both.
- 8) Establishes that a second violation of that above shall be punishable as a misdemeanor by up to one year in jail and a fine of \$1,000.
- 9) Establishes that a third or subsequent violation of the above shall be punishable by imprisonment in a county jail not exceeding one year, by imprisonment in county jail for 16 months, two years, or three years, or by a fine of up to \$2,000, or by both that fine and imprisonment.
- 10) States that the DOJ shall require the licensed firearms dealer to charge each firearm barrel purchaser or transferee a fee of up to \$5 to conduct the eligibility check, as defined, but shall not to exceed the department's actual processing costs. The fee may be increased each year by an amount not to exceed \$1 as necessary to reimburse the department for costs to conduct the eligibility check.
- 11) Defines "firearm barrel" as the tube, usually metal and cylindrical, through which a projectile or shot charge is fired. A firearm barrel includes any forging, casting, printing, extrusion, machined body, or similar article that has reached a stage in manufacture where it may readily be completed, assembled, or converted to be used as a firearm barrel, or that is

marketed or sold to the public to become or be used as a firearm barrel once completed, assembled, or converted. A firearm barrel may have a rifled or smooth bore.

- 12) Requires money received by DOJ deposited in the DROS Special Account of the General Fund to be used to offset the costs associated with implementing this bill, among other laws.
- 13) Authorizes the DOJ to adopt regulations to implement its provisions, as specified.
- 14) Makes other technical and nonsubstantive changes.
- 15) Establishes that provisions of the bill are severable.

## COMMENTS

### According to the Author

"In recent years, California experienced a proliferation of ghost guns built from unregulated parts including unfinished frames and receivers. The legislature and the governor have taken strong action to prevent the unregulated sale and possession of these untraceable firearms. However, there is an emerging ghost gun threat. Criminals and the firearm industry quickly pivoted away from ghost gun kits and parts to three-dimensional printing (3D printing) of as many parts as possible to construct a working firearm, without having to go through a firearm background check or being subject to any of the other state or federal laws regulating firearms. These firearms are being recovered at increased rates all over the state and it is imperative that we take action now to curb the threat.

"This bill builds on California's nation-leading gun safety laws and seeks to prevent firearm assembly by those who are not legally authorized to possess them."

### Arguments in Support

According to the *City of Alameda*, "Firearm barrels, especially those that can be used to convert pistols into more lethal or untraceable weapons, are currently sold without oversight, by mail or online, without background checks or transaction records. Unregulated parts like barrels enable the assembly of "ghost guns," weapons without serial numbers that evade tracing, posing a significant threat to public safety.

"SB 704 addresses all off these issues. Specifically, this bill ensures that all barrel transfers are conducted through licensed firearm dealers, in-person, and with a background check requirement to help deter illicit access to these firearm barrels. Additionally, the record-keeping provisions in this bill will establish accountability and aid law enforcement with investigations into firearm misuse. By mandating that these transactions flow through licensed dealers, SB 704 improves the traceability of firearm parts and complements existing gun control measures—supporting safer, more secure communities.

"The City of Alameda supports gun safety and common-sense gun laws and policies that keep guns out of the wrong hands, including expanded background check requirements. For these reasons, we are pleased to support SB 704 and respectfully ask for your "AYE" vote when this measure comes before you."

### Arguments in Opposition

According to *Gun Owners of America*, "On behalf of Gun Owners of California, I am writing in my continued strong opposition to SB 704, which would require all sales/transfers of firearm barrels to be processed through a licensed dealer, complete with background checks and entry into state databases. California already enforces some of the strictest gun laws in the country—including background checks for every firearm purchase. Adding barrels to this process is unnecessary, duplicative, and targets the wrong people. Criminals aren't walking into gun stores and asking for serialized barrels. This bill burdens only the law-abiding.

"A firearm barrel is an essential component of a firearm, and as such, is protected under the Second Amendment. The continued scrutiny and regulation of individual gun parts—like barrels, springs, and pins—is not about safety. It's about creating a slow, bureaucratic stranglehold on gun ownership by regulating every possible aspect of a constitutionally protected right. If someone already owns a legally purchased, registered firearm, there is no legitimate safety interest in requiring them to undergo another background check just to replace or upgrade a barrel.

"Worse yet, this bill proposes a penalty of up to \$10,000 and a year in jail for violating its terms—an absurd and excessive punishment for something as simple as acquiring a piece of metal tubing that only functions when paired with a firearm already subject to full regulation. SB 704 is not about safety; it's about harassment and intimidation of lawful gun owners through regulatory overkill. We urge you to refocus legislative energy on real solutions to violent crime—not the micromanagement of constitutionally protected tools."

### FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

- 1) Costs (DROS Account, General Fund) to DOJ, possibly in the hundreds of thousands of dollars to low millions of dollars annually. DOJ anticipates costs of approximately \$851,000 in fiscal year (FY) 2025-26, \$805,000 in FY 2026-27, \$471,000 in FY 2027-28, and \$259,000 ongoing thereafter. This estimate includes one full-time IT specialist in DOJ's California Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division to help manage software development project, project consultants within CJIS, and increased workload in DOJ's Bureau of Firearms for implementation of the bill's requirements and ongoing operations, including conducting background checks, processing requests for information from criminal justice agencies, and drafting regulations and information bulletins.

In addition to these costs, DOJ will likely incur workload to defend this bill from legal challenges, given the legal landscape (discussed below). If DOJ must hire additional legal staff as a result, workload costs may be in the low hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.

- 2) Cost pressures (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund) of an unknown but potentially significant amount to the courts to adjudicate charges of the crimes created by this bill. A defendant charged with a misdemeanor or felony is entitled to a jury trial and, if the defendant is indigent, legal representation provided by the government. Actual court costs will depend on the number of violations, prosecutorial discretion, and the amount of court time needed to adjudicate each case. Although courts are not funded on the basis of workload, increased pressure on the Trial Court Trust Fund may create a demand for increased funding for courts from the General Fund. The fiscal year 2025-26 state budget

provides \$82 million ongoing General Fund to the Trial Court Trust Fund for court operations.

- 3) Costs (local funds, General Fund) to the counties and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incarcerate people convicted of organized retail theft. Actual incarceration costs will depend on the number of convictions, the length of each sentence, and whether each sentence must be served in county jail or state prison. The average annual cost to incarcerate one person in county jail is approximately \$29,000, though costs are higher in larger counties. The Legislative Analyst's Office estimates the average annual cost to incarcerate one person in state prison is \$133,000. County incarceration costs are not subject to reimbursement by the state. However, overcrowding in county jails creates cost pressure on the General Fund because the state has historically granted new funding to counties to offset overcrowding resulting from public safety realignment.

## VOTES

### SENATE FLOOR: 28-11-1

**YES:** Allen, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Cortese, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Umberg, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

**NO:** Alvarado-Gil, Choi, Dahle, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Seyarto, Strickland, Valladares

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Reyes

### ASM PUBLIC SAFETY: 7-2-0

**YES:** Schultz, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Nguyen, Ramos, Sharp-Collins

**NO:** Alanis, Lackey

### ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-4-0

**YES:** Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Ahrens, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache

**NO:** Sanchez, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

## UPDATED

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