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**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

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Bill No: SB 704  
Author: Arreguín (D), et al.  
Amended: 9/2/25  
Vote: 21

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SENATE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE: 5-1, 4/29/25  
AYES: Arreguín, Caballero, Gonzalez, Pérez, Wiener  
NOES: Seyarto

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 5-1, 5/23/25  
AYES: Caballero, Cabaldon, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab  
NOES: Seyarto  
NO VOTE RECORDED: Dahle

SENATE FLOOR: 28-11, 6/4/25  
AYES: 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  
NOES: Alvarado-Gil, Choi, Dahle, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Niello, Ochoa Bogh,  
Seyarto, Strickland, Valladares  
NO VOTE RECORDED: Reyes

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 57-20, 9/8/25 - See last page for vote

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**SUBJECT:** Firearms: firearm barrels

**SOURCE:** Brady California  
Brady Campaign

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**DIGEST:** This bill prohibits, commencing January 1, 2027, the sale or transfer of a firearm barrel unless the transaction is completed in person by a licensed firearms dealer, as specified.

*Assembly Amendments* expressly exempt barrels attached or affixed to firearms, delay implementation to July 1, 2027, modify the penalty structure, expand exemptions related to estate transfers and buyback programs, and expands the prohibition to include possession with the intent to sell or offer to sell a firearm barrel, as specified.

## **ANALYSIS:**

Existing law:

- 1) Generally prohibits the sale, lease or transfer of firearms unless the person has been issued a license by the Department of Justice (DOJ), and establishes various exceptions to this prohibition. (Penal (Pen.) Code, §§ 26500 – 26625.)
- 2) Requires a firearms dealer or licensee to meet specified requirements as a prerequisite of obtaining a firearms dealer license. (Pen. Code, § 26700.)
- 3) Provides that a license to sell firearms is subject to forfeiture for any violation of a number of specified prohibitions and requirements, with limited exceptions. (Pen. Code, § 26800, subd. (a).)
- 4) Includes several exemptions from the requirement that transfers go through a licensed dealer, including for the transfer of a firearm by bequest or intestate succession, or to a surviving spouse, or transfers by a person acting pursuant to operation of law, a court order, or pursuant to other specified laws. (Pen. Code, §§ 26505, 26515.)
- 5) Provides that where neither party to a firearms transaction holds a dealer's license (i.e. a "private party transaction"), the parties shall complete the transaction through a licensed firearms dealer. (Pen. Code, § 27545.)
- 6) Requires firearms dealers to keep a register or record of electronic or telephonic transfer of firearms (also known as the Dealers' Record of Sale, or DROS), unless certain specified circumstances apply. Makes a failure to comply a misdemeanor. (Pen. Code, § 28100.)
- 7) Provides that the register required above shall be prepared by and obtained from the State Printer, and that DOJ shall prescribe the form of the register and the record of electronic transfer. (Pen. Code, §§ 28105, 28155.)
- 8) Establishes the DROS Special Account within the General Fund, which shall be available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for expenditure by the DOJ to offset the reasonable costs of firearms-related regulatory and enforcement

activities related to the sale, purchase, manufacturing, lawful or unlawful possession, loan, or transfer of firearms, as specified. (Pen. Code, §§ 28233, 28235).

- 9) Requires that in connection with any sale, loan or transfer of a firearm, a licensed dealer must provide the DOJ with specified personal information about the seller and purchaser as well as the name and address of the dealer. This personal information of buyer and seller required to be provided includes: the name; address; phone number; date of birth; place of birth; occupation; eye color; hair color; height; weight; race; sex; citizenship status; and a driver's license number; California identification card number; or, military identification number. A copy of the DROS, containing the buyer and seller's personal information, must be provided to the buyer or seller upon request. (Pen. Code, §§ 28160, 28210, & 28215.)
- 10) Requires the DOJ, upon submission of firearm purchaser information, to examine its records to determine if the purchaser is prohibited from possessing, receiving, owning, or purchasing a firearm. Prohibits the delivery of a firearm within 10 days of the application to purchase, or, after notice by the department, within 10 days of the submission to the DOJ of any corrections to the application to purchase, or within 10 days of the submission to the DOJ of a specified fee. (Pen. Code, §§ 28200-28250.)
- 11) Provides that the DOJ shall participate in the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), and specifies the process DOJ must follow in notifying various parties that a prospective firearm purchaser is prohibited from acquiring a firearm under state or federal law. (Pen. Code, § 28220.)
- 12) Defines “firearm” for most provisions of the Penal Code related to firearms as a device, designed to be used as a weapon, from which is expelled through a barrel, a projectile by the force of an explosion or other form of combustion. (Pen. Code, § 16520, subd. (a).)
- 13) Provides that for numerous specified provisions, the definition of “firearm” immediately above includes the frame or receiver of the weapon, including both a completed frame or receiver or firearm precursor part. (Pen. Code, § 16520, subd. (b).)
- 14) Defines “firearm precursor part” as 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 the frame or receiver of a functional firearm, or that is marketed or sold to the public to

become or be used as the frame or receiver of a functional firearm once completed, assembled or converted. (Pen. Code, § 16531, subd. (a).)

- 15) Defines “federally regulated firearm precursor part” as any firearm precursor part deemed to be a firearm pursuant to specified federal statutes and regulations issued pursuant thereto, and, if required, has been imprinted with a serial number by a federal licensee authorized to serialize firearms in compliance with those federal laws. (Pen. Code, § 16519.)
- 16) Prohibits the purchase, sale, offer for sale, or transfer of ownership of any firearm precursor part that is not a federally regulated firearm precursor part, except as specified. (Pen. Code, §§ 30400, 30420.)
- 17) Authorizes DOJ to issue ammunition vendor licenses pursuant to a statutorily prescribed process, and requires a valid ammunition vendor license for any person, firm, corporation, or other business for the sale of more than 500 rounds in any 30-day period, as specified. (Pen. Code, §§ 30385-30395, 30342.)
- 18) Requires ammunition vendors to collect specified ammunition purchaser information and transmit the information to DOJ. DOJ is required to electronically approve the purchase or transfer of ammunition through a vendor, as specified. (Pen. Code, §§ 30352, 30370.)

This bill:

- 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 entities from the process outlined above:
  - a) Sales or transfers to federal, state and local law enforcement agencies;
  - b) Sales or transfer to federal firearms licensees;
  - c) Sales or transfers to the United States military;
  - d) 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;

- e) 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;
  - f) 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.
  - g) 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
  - h) 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 conforming changes.
- 15) Establishes that provisions of the bill are severable.

## **Comments**

Existing federal law requires all federally licensed firearms dealers (FFLs) to conduct background checks on prospective firearm purchasers. In order to process those background checks, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) created the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), a digital catalog of records integrating three separate national databases which FFLs can query when processing the purchase of a firearm. Existing federal law also requires FFLs to "identify by means of a serial number engraved or cast on the receiver or frame of the weapon" each firearm manufactured in, or imported into, the United States.

In order to address California's ghost gun epidemic, the Legislature passed AB 1621 (Gipson) Ch. 76, Stats. of 2022, which enacted a host of reforms related to the regulation of firearm "precursor parts," or components that may be readily convertible into usable firearms. Generally, AB 1621 rendered the sale, transfer and manufacture of both completed and unfinished frames and receivers (another way of referring to firearm precursor parts) subject to the same rules as fully assembled firearms. Among the changes enacted by AB 1621 was a prohibition against the knowing possession of any firearm that does not have a valid state or federal serial number or mark of identification. AB 1621 additionally prohibited

the sale or transfer of manufactured or assembled firearms by entities that are not federally licensed and prohibited any person or entity from knowingly manufacturing or assembly, or aiding and abetting the manufacture or assembly of a firearm that is not properly serialized. The measure also established several provisions of law limiting the acquisition, possession, purchase and use of CNC milling machines that have the sole or primary function of manufacturing firearms by any entity except for a federally licensed firearms manufacturer or importer. In 2023, AB 1089 (Gipson, Chapter 243, Statutes of 2023), extended these limitations to three-dimensional printers.

Under existing California law, all firearm sales and transfers, including sales and transfers of firearm precursor parts, must be completed through licensed firearm dealers. As firearm barrels are neither precursor parts nor firearms in and of themselves, state law imposes virtually no restrictions on their sale or transfer. This bill seeks to change that by prohibiting, commencing July 1, 2027, the sale or transfer of a firearm barrel unless that transaction is completed in person by a licensed firearms dealer and the dealer has conducted an eligibility check, as specified. The bill further requires the firearm dealer to record certain information regarding the transaction and the purchaser/transferee and submit that information to the DOJ. Exempt from these requirements are federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, the United States military, a person already undergoing a state and federal background check because they are purchasing a firearm, specified collectors, estate transfers, specified buyback programs, and barrels attached to firearms. Additionally, a first or second violation of these requirements is punishable as a misdemeanor, and a third or subsequent offense is punishable as a wobbler.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

- 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.

- 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.
- 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.

**SUPPORT:** (Verified 9/8/25)

Brady California (co-source)

Brady Campaign (co-source)

City of Alameda

City of Oakland

City of Santa Rosa

Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund

Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence

San Francisco City Attorney's Office

Team Enough - UC Berkeley Chapter

**OPPOSITION:** (Verified 9/8/25)

ACLU California Action  
California Rifle and Pistol Association  
Gun Owners of California  
Libertarian Party of Fresno County  
1 Individual

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 57-20, 9/8/25

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Connolly, Elhawary, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Valencia, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NOES: Alanis, Castillo, Chen, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Ellis, Flora, Gallagher, Jeff Gonzalez, Hadwick, Hoover, Johnson, Lackey, Macedo, Patterson, Sanchez, Ta, Tangipa, Wallis

NO VOTE RECORDED: Arambula, Bains, Nguyen

Prepared by: Alex Barnett / PUB. S. /  
9/8/25 19:51:49

\*\*\*\* **END** \*\*\*\*