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# SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair  
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

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## SB 948 (Arreguín) - Firearms: safety certificates

**Version:** March 18, 2026  
**Urgency:** No  
**Hearing Date:** April 13, 2026

**Policy Vote:** PUB. S. 5 - 1  
**Mandate:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Bob Franzoia

**Bill Summary:** SB 948 would require personal firearm importers to obtain a Firearm Safety Certificate (FSC) within 60 days of moving to California, and to require all firearm safety certificate applicants, commencing July 1, 2028, to complete a firearm training course that includes instruction on firearm safety and live-fire shooting exercises.

### Fiscal Impact:

- Unknown costs, potentially in excess of \$100,000, for the Department of Justice (DOJ) to process applications for FSCs for personal firearms importers. These costs would be offset by application fee revenues. (Firearm Safety and Enforcement Special Fund)
- Unknown fee revenue gains, potentially in the mid-hundreds of thousands of dollars annually, related to the issuance of new FSCs for personal firearms importers. The \$15 of the \$25 FSC application fee is deposited into the Firearm Safety and Enforcement Special Fund.
- Unknown, potentially significant court workload cost pressures to the extent enforcement actions are taken against personal firearms importers for failure to obtain an FSC within 120 days. The number of cases that would be brought as a result of this bill is unknown. It generally costs about \$8,000 to operate a courtroom for one eight-hour day. If cases brought as a result of this bill take an additional 50 hours of court time in the aggregate in a given year, the cost pressures to the courts would surpass the Suspense File threshold. Although courts are not funded on the basis of workload, increased staff time and resources may create a need for increased funding for courts from the General Fund to perform existing duties. (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund)
- Costs (local funds, General Fund) to the counties to incarcerate people convicted of the misdemeanor created by this bill. Actual incarceration costs will depend on the number of convictions and the length of each sentence. The average annual cost to incarcerate one person in county jail is approximately \$29,000. 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.

**Background:** Under existing law, no person may purchase, transfer, receive, or sell a firearm without a firearm safety certificate (FSC). Existing law also prohibits a person from selling or transferring a firearm to any person who does not possess a FSC. A violation of the FSC requirement is a misdemeanor, punishable by up to six months in county jail, a fine of up to \$1,000, or both. Current law provides various exemptions from

the FSC requirement for specified persons, including active and retired peace officers, licensed firearm dealers, and federally licensed collectors.

Existing law requires DOJ to develop and periodically update a study guide and written test for a FSC. Applicants are required to pay a \$25 fee and pass a written test developed by the DOJ that covers current firearms law, basic firearms safety with respect to carrying and handling firearms, safe storage, the responsibilities of firearms ownership, and the risks associated with bringing a firearm into the home. Tests are administered by DOJ-certified instructors who have a prescribed minimum level of skill, knowledge, and training in firearms safety. The FSC expires five years after the date of issuance.

Existing law defines a “personal firearm importer” as non-licensed individual who has moved into the State of California, owns a firearm that is legal within the state, and intends to possess that firearm within the state, as specified. Within 60 days of bringing a firearm into the state, a personal firearm importer must do one of the following: file a specified report with the DOJ that includes information about the individual and describes the firearm; sell or transfer the firearm, as specified; sell or transfer the firearm to a licensed dealer; or sell or transfer the firearm to a sheriff or police department.

**Related Legislation:** SB 683 (Block), Chapter 761/2013, extended the safety certificate requirement for handguns to all firearms and required the performance of a safe handling demonstration to receive a long gun.

AB 35 (Shelley), Chapter 940/2001, required any person who wants to purchase or otherwise transfer a handgun, except as specified, to obtain a handgun safety certificate. Enactment of AB 35 was contingent upon the enactment of SB 52, with the bill that was chaptered last establishing the handgun safety certificate scheme.

SB 52 (Scott), Chapter 942/2001, required any person who wants to purchase or otherwise transfer a handgun, except as specified, to obtain a handgun safety certificate. Enactment of SB 52 was contingent upon the enactment of AB 35, with the bill that was chaptered last establishing the handgun safety certificate scheme.

SB 1253 (Gonzalez) 2024, similar to SB 948, would prohibit a person from possessing a firearm without a valid, unexpired firearm safety certificate, except as provided, commencing on January 1, 2026. The bill would also require a person who brings a firearm into this state to obtain a firearm safety certificate within 120 days, as specified. SB 1253 was held in Assembly Appropriations.

AB 1187 (Celeste Rodriguez) 2025, similar to SB 948, would require a personal firearms importer to obtain an FSC within 60 days of bringing a firearm into the state and provide a copy of the FSC to DOJ. An applicant for an FSC would be required to complete a specified training course that must be taught and supervised by a firearms instructor certified by DOJ. AB 1187 was held in Assembly Appropriations.

**Staff Comments:** DOJ indicates that the one-time and ongoing administrative costs associated with this bill cannot be absorbed within existing budgeted resources, and notes that costs would likely be a General Fund impact due to insufficient cash reserves

in the Dealers' Record of Sale Special Account. Staff notes, however, that the Firearm Safety and Enforcement Special Fund may be a more appropriate funding source for DOJ's administrative costs.

The fiscal and revenue impacts of this bill would depend upon the number of current gun owners who have expired FSCs, the numbers of gun owners with FSCs that expire each year and estimates on the number of personal firearms importers who move to California each year.