

SENATE THIRD READING
SB 948 (Arreguín)
As Amended August 13, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires applicants for firearm safety certificates (FSCs) to complete a four-hour training course and personal firearms importers, certify under penalty of perjury that they have obtained a valid FSC, and send a report to the California Department of Justice (DOJ) that includes a valid FSC.

Major Provisions

- 1) Requires a personal firearm importer, i.e., person moving into the State of California, to do the following within 180 days:
 - a) Submit to DOJ a report with details about the person, residence, and firearm(s).
 - b) Obtain a valid firearm safety certificate (FSC) and include a copy of the valid FSC within the report to DOJ.
 - c) Certify under penalty of perjury an FSC has been obtained, including submitting the FSC certificate number. If the person qualifies for an exemption, as defined, they must specify the exemption in the report. DOJ may require that the individual also include a copy of the firearm safety certificate, or documentation establishing that the individual qualifies for an exemption to this requirement, within the report.
- 2) Punishes with an infraction, the failure to include an FSC within the report submitted to DOJ, as specified.
- 3) Punishes with an infraction a person bringing any firearm, except an antique firearm, into California without obtaining a valid FSC within 180 days of bringing that firearm into this state if the person is required to report the importation of the firearm to DOJ.
- 4) Removes provision that establishes a personal firearm importer has demonstrated compliance with the law if the firearm was sold or transferred, the firearm transaction cannot be completed by the dealer, and the firearm can be returned to the personal firearm importer.
- 5) Authorizes appropriations by the Legislature for implementing defined sections of the bill if DOJ determines there is insufficient funding for implementation.
- 6) States that a personal firearms importer shall not be subject to defined penalties if evidence of violations arise only from submitting records or other communications to DOJ to comply with the law.
- 7) Requires every applicant for an FSC to complete a 4-hour training course, beginning January 1, 2029, which shall cover topics that may be covered on the firearm safety certificate test and information provided in the firearm safety certificate study guide published by DOJ, as specified. The instruction shall, at a minimum, ensure trainees understand all of the following:

- a) The responsibilities of firearm ownership and fundamentals of firearm safety.
 - b) California laws governing safe firearm storage and importance of secure storage to prevent unauthorized access and use of firearms.
 - c) Safe firearm handling and fundamentals of shooting firearms.
 - d) California laws relating to private sales and transfers of a firearm, prohibited person transfers and relinquishment requirements, and straw purchases.
 - e) State laws pertaining to self-defense, use-of-force guidelines, and techniques for conflict resolution.
 - f) Laws pertaining to carrying and handling firearms and lawful transfer of firearms in vehicles.
- 8) States that FSC training shall be taught and supervised by firearms instructors certified by the DOJ, and as defined.
- 9) Establishes that the live-fire shooting exercises shall take place on a firing range and shall include a demonstration by the applicant of safe handling of firearms and basic firearm shooting proficiency.
- 10) States that the training course requirement shall not apply to individuals with valid concealed carry weapons permits or who have completed a training course for an initial or renewal CCW license, as defined, within the previous three years.
- 11) Provides that the DOJ may promulgate regulations and provide additional information for the implementation of this section.
- 12) Authorizes the Dealers' Record of Sale Special Account to be used, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for any costs associated with this law's implementation and ongoing expenses.
- 13) Includes severability clause.

COMMENTS

According to the Author

"Although California has enacted some of the strongest gun safety laws in the nation, currently state law does not require those that import guns into California to secure a Firearm Safety Certificate. Additionally, new gun purchasers are not required to complete education courses or training in safe firearm handling, including live-fire instruction. SB 948 address this gap by requiring comprehensive and meaningful training for anyone seeking to obtain a Firearm Safety Certificate. By strengthening the education and training component tied to the certificate, this measure ensures that individuals who choose to own firearms have demonstrated both a clear understanding of applicable laws and the practical skills necessary to handle a firearm safely."

Arguments in Support

According to the bill's sponsor, the *Brady United Against Gun Violence*, "California has the most comprehensive system of regulating firearms purchases and possession, yet currently does not require either training or education to obtain a firearms safety certificate. It is common sense that those who are purchasing a firearm should be properly trained on how to use, handle, and store firearms and should participate in live-fire training. However, a study from 2015 found that nearly 40% of all gun owners never received any training.

"Firearm training is crucial not only as an effective means to prevent accidental shootings, it also equips gun purchasers to actually protect themselves in the way they envision. Referring to self-defense situations, a study noted that "the quality and frequency of training to maintain acquired skills is predictive of how someone with a firearm will react in a stressful situation and whether they can successfully defend themselves." For example, a police spokesman and a law enforcement firearms trainer told the study's authors "when your adrenaline is pumping and your heart is beating faster, you're not going to shoot the same way you do at the range — not without a lot of training." Another study participant, an NRA member and firearms instructor likewise told the authors that, "in a life-or-death encounter, a gun is only as good as its user's training." The study author's thus concluded that "citizens who seek to carry a firearm, open or concealed, should be a person of sound character and have a minimum skill with the use of a firearm in a stressful situation of self-defense." The study accordingly suggested that civilian gun owners should undertake a combination of classroom, live fire, and judgment shooting. The authors also noted that these reasonable training requirements pale in comparison to what states regularly demand of would-be drivers in driver's training or would-be business owners who want to cut hair or paint nails.

"The responsibilities inherent in carrying a firearm attach from the moment a person takes possession of the firearm, which makes coupling firearm purchasing with training sound policy. Indeed, several other states already require training for gun purchase or possession including Oregon, New Jersey, Delaware, Hawaii, Massachusetts and Maryland. It is time for California to do the same.

"This bill builds on current Department of Justice requirements to ensure that, on after July 1, 2028, gun purchasers have robust and meaningful training. The one-day training would include instruction on firearm safety and handling and live-fire shooting exercises on a firing range. Additionally, this bill will require individuals who establish residency in California and bring a firearm from outside the state to obtain a firearm safety certificate."

Arguments in Opposition

According to the *California Rifle and Pistol Association*, "Even with the recent amendments extending the personal firearm importer reporting period from 60 to 180 days and reducing the mandated training from eight to four hours, SB 948 remains an unnecessary, burdensome, and constitutionally flawed expansion of government control over law-abiding firearm owners. The bill continues to transform the simple Firearm Safety Certificate (FSC) written test into a de facto licensing regime with mandatory in-person training requirements.

"Key Problems with the Amended Bill:

"New Mandatory In-Person Training Requirement (Effective July 1, 2028)

"FSC applicants must complete a state-mandated four-hour training course within the prior year, including classroom instruction on specified topics and at least one hour of live-fire shooting exercises on a firing range. The course must be taught by DOJ-certified instructors. While CRPA has long supported voluntary firearms safety training through our own programs, we oppose government-mandated live-fire training as a prerequisite for exercising Second Amendment rights.

"Personal Firearm Importer Restrictions

"The bill requires individuals bringing firearms into California (including new residents) to obtain a valid FSC within 180 days and submit it with their DOJ report. This imposes immediate compliance burdens on law-abiding citizens who already lawfully own firearms under the standards of their prior state.

"Significant Ongoing Concerns:

"Capacity and Access Barriers: California's shooting ranges and certified instructors lack the capacity to handle the anticipated surge in demand for mandatory live-fire sessions. Rural and underserved areas will face severe shortages, long wait times, and denials of access to a constitutional right.

"Financial Burden: The bill imposes no cost caps on training fees, range time, or travel. This will disproportionately harm low-income families, seniors, first-time buyers, and residents in remote areas.

"Lack of Public Safety Benefit: California's existing FSC test already covers core safety and legal topics. There is no credible evidence that adding mandatory live-fire training will reduce accidents or crime. The bill targets compliant owners rather than prohibited persons or enforcement of current laws.

"Constitutional Issues: Under the U.S. Supreme Court's Bruen decision, firearm regulations must be consistent with this nation's historical tradition. Mandatory government-approved training and live-fire proficiency as a condition of ownership or importation lacks historical analogue and impermissibly burdens the core Second Amendment right.

"Exemptions and Inequities: The bill exempts valid concealed carry permit holders from the new training but continues to impose barriers on other responsible citizens who have demonstrated competence through prior ownership and training elsewhere.

"CRPA urges the Assembly Public Safety Committee to reject SB 948 in its entirety. Public safety is better served by enforcing existing laws against prohibited persons, prosecuting violent criminals, and supporting voluntary education programs — not by adding more restrictions that burden law-abiding firearm owners."

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, "Costs of up to \$400,000 (General Fund) to DOJ associated with the training requirement, including instructor program standards, curriculum specifications, and course completion verification, and for modifications to the systems used to process firearms applications and new resident reports. DOJ identifies one

limited-term analyst beginning January 1, 2027 to promulgate regulations, one permanent analyst beginning July 1, 2028 to process instructor applications and support the certificate system, overtime for existing staff, limited consultation by two deputy attorneys general, and limited-term consultant resources within the California Justice Information Services Division. According to DOJ, the department cannot absorb these costs within existing budgeted resources. While DOJ's firearms-related workload is typically supported by the Dealers' Record of Sale (DROS) Special Account, DOJ states that current DROS revenues are insufficient to absorb the costs of this bill, and a General Fund appropriation would be required. Ongoing administrative costs of an unknown amount, likely minor, would also accrue to DOJ to verify firearm safety certificates submitted with personal firearm importer reports."

VOTES

SENATE FLOOR: 28-9-3

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

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

ABS, ABST OR NV: Cortese, Dahle, Menjivar

ASM PUBLIC SAFETY: 7-1-1

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

NO: Lackey

ABS, ABST OR NV: Alanis

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-4-0

YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache

NO: Hoover, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

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