
UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bill No: SB 948
Author: Arreguín (D), et al.
Amended: 8/13/26
Vote: 21

SENATE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE: 5-1, 3/17/26
AYES: Arreguín, Caballero, Pérez, Reyes, Wiener
NOES: Seyarto

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 5-2, 5/14/26
AYES: Cervantes, Cabaldon, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab
NOES: Seyarto, Dahle

SENATE FLOOR: 28-9, 5/27/26
AYES: 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
NOES: Alvarado-Gil, Choi, Grove, Jones, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Seyarto, Strickland, Valladares
NO VOTE RECORDED: Cortese, Dahle, Menjivar

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: Passed, 8/24/26

SUBJECT: Firearms: safety certificates

SOURCE: Brady Campaign
Consumer Protection Policy Center at the University of San Diego
School of Law

DIGEST: This bill requires all applicants for firearm safety certificates (FSCs) to complete a four-hour training course and requires personal firearms importers to 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.

Assembly Amendments reduce penalties; require personal firearm importers to complete a self-certification under penalty of perjury that they have obtained an FSC or qualify for an exemption, delays implementation of the training requirement to January 1, 2029 and expands topics that must be covered, creates a funding mechanism, and gives DOJ specified regulatory authority.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Provides that a well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed. (U.S. Const., 2nd Amend.)
- 2) Specifies that a felony is a crime that is punishable by death, by imprisonment in the state prison, or, notwithstanding any other law, by imprisonment in a county jail, as specified, and specifies that every other crime or public offense is a misdemeanor except those offenses that are classified as infractions. (Penal (Pen.) Code, § 17, subd. (a).)
- 3) 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. (Pen. Code, §§ 26500-26625.)
- 4) 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, §§ 26800-26915.)
- 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) Sets forth various exemptions to the requirement that a private party transaction occur through a licensed dealer (Pen. Code, §§ 27850-27970.)
- 7) Defines a "personal firearm importer" as a 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. (Pen. Code, § 17000.)
- 8) Requires that a personal firearm importer does one of the following within 60 days of bringing a firearm into California:

- a) Submit a report to DOJ including information concerning that individual and a description of the firearm in question, as specified.
 - b) Sell or transfer the firearm via private party transaction, as specified.
 - c) Sell or transfer the firearm to a licensed dealer, as specified; or,
 - d) Sell or transfer the firearm to a sheriff or police department. (Pen. Code, § 27560, subd. (a).)
- 9) Establishes the intent of the Legislature in enacting specified provisions to require that persons who obtain firearms have a basic familiarity with those firearms, including, but not limited to, the safe handling and storage of those firearms. (Pen. Code, §31610.)
- 10) Requires DOJ to develop firearm safety certificates to be issued by instructors certified by the department to those persons who have complied with specified requirements regarding firearm safety, and which expire 5 years after the date of issuance. (Pen. Code, §31655, subds. (a), (c).)
- 11) Prohibits a licensed firearm dealer from delivering a firearm unless the person receiving the firearm presents to the dealer a valid firearm safety certificate. Requires the firearm dealer to retain a photocopy of the firearm safety certificate as proof of compliance. (Pen. Code, § 26840, subd. (a).)
- 12) Prohibits a person from purchasing or receiving any firearm, except an antique firearm, without a valid firearm safety certificate, except that in the case of a handgun, an unexpired handgun safety certificate may be used. (Pen. Code, § 31615, subd. (a).)
- 13) Prohibits a person from selling, delivering, loaning, or transferring any firearm, except an antique firearm, to any person who does not have a valid firearm safety certificate, except that in the case of a handgun, an unexpired handgun safety certificate may be used. (Pen. Code, § 31615, subd. (a).)
- 14) Provides that a person who violates the above prohibition is guilty of a misdemeanor. (Pen. Code, § 31615, subd. (b).)
- 15) Provides that a DOJ-certified instructor shall not issue a firearm safety certificate to any person who has not complied with specified safety requirements or who is under 18, a violation of which is grounds for the revocation of the instructor's certification. (Pen. Code, § 31625.)

- 16) Requires DOJ to develop a firearm safety certificate instruction manual in various languages, as specified. (Pen. Code, § 31630.)
- 17) Requires the DOJ to certify firearm safety certificate instructors and prescribe a minimum level of skill, knowledge and competency for all such instructors, as specified. (Pen. Code, § 31635.)
- 18) Requires the DOJ to develop a written objective test in various languages, passage of which is a prerequisite to obtaining a firearm safety certificate, and to develop a study guide for that test. (Pen. Code, §§ 31640, 31641, 31645.)
- 19) Contains various exemptions to the firearm safety certificate requirement, including for active and retired peace officers, licensed firearm dealers, federally licensed collectors, concealed carry permit holders, hunting license holders, and specified individuals who receive a firearm via operation of law. (Pen. Code § 31700.)

This bill:

- 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 the provision of existing law that establishes that 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.

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

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

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.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/24/26)

Brady California (co-source)

Consumer Protection Policy Center/USD School of Law (co-source)

California Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians

City of Alameda
Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund
Giffords
Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America
Students Demand Action for Gun Sense in America
Team Enough - UC Berkeley Chapter

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/24/26)

California Rifle and Pistol Association
California Waterfowl Association
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Delta Waterfowl
Gun Owners of California, INC.
National Rifle Association - Institute for Legislative Action
Safari Club International

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