



Fiscal Impact Statement for Proposed Legislation

Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission

Senate Bill No. 715 (Patron – Edwards)

LD#: 16104610

Date: 1/27/2016

Topic: Criminal history checks at firearms shows

Fiscal Impact Summary:

- **State Adult Correctional Facilities:**
\$50,000 *
- **Local Adult Correctional Facilities:**
Cannot be determined
- **Adult Community Corrections Programs:**
Cannot be determined

- **Juvenile Correctional Centers:**
Cannot be determined**
- **Juvenile Detention Facilities:**
Cannot be determined**

**Provided by the Department of Juvenile Justice

* The estimated amount of the necessary appropriation cannot be determined for periods of imprisonment in state adult correctional facilities; therefore, Chapter 665 of the 2015 Acts of Assembly requires the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission to assign a minimum fiscal impact of \$50,000.

Summary of Proposed Legislation:

The proposal adds § 54.1-4201.2, relating to purchases at firearms shows, to the *Code of Virginia*. As proposed, any party to a firearm transaction at a firearms show would have the option to ask the Department of State Police to determine if a prospective purchaser or transferee is prohibited from possessing a firearm. This determination would be made in accordance with the definitions, procedures, and prohibitions set out in § 18.2-308.2:2. The proposal contains an enactment clause stating that the provisions of the proposal would not become effective unless the Department of State Police receives approval to implement the proposed policies and procedures from the U.S. Department of Justice.

Currently, under § 18.2-308.2:2, making a materially false statement on a consent form that is required to purchase a firearm from a licensed dealer is a Class 5 felony. Any person who willfully and intentionally sells, rents, trades, or transfers a firearm in violation of these provisions is guilty of a Class 6 felony. Willfully and intentionally requesting or obtaining criminal history information under false pretenses or unlawfully disseminating criminal history record information is a Class 2 misdemeanor.

Analysis:

According to fiscal year (FY) 2014 and FY2015 Sentencing Guidelines data, there were 172 felony convictions under § 18.2-308.2:2(K) for making a false statement on a consent form. This offense was the primary, or most serious, offense in 163 of the cases. The majority (74.8%) of these offenders did not receive an active term of incarceration to serve after sentencing, while 19.6% of the offenders were sentenced to a local-responsible (jail) term, for which the median sentence was seven months. The

remaining 5.5% were sentenced to a state-responsible (prison) term. For offenders sentenced to prison, the median sentence length was 1.25 years.

The Circuit Court Case Management System (CMS) for FY2010 through FY2015 indicates that no offenders were convicted of a Class 6 felony under § 18.2-308.2:2(L) relating to dealers selling or transferring firearms in violation of § 18.2-308.2:2.

According to General District CMS data for FY2014 and FY2015, two individuals were convicted of a misdemeanor under § 18.2-308.2:2(F) for unlawfully disseminating criminal history information or obtaining criminal history information under false pretenses. Neither of these offenders received an active term of incarceration to serve after sentencing.

Impact of Proposed Legislation:

State adult correctional facilities. According to the Virginia State Police (VSP), licensed firearms dealers are required to conduct background checks on their potential buyers, even when the dealer conducts the sale at a firearms show. VSP reports that they have arrested individuals for making a false statement on the consent form currently required by § 18.2-308.2:2 when the transaction occurred at a firearms show. Because it may increase the instances in which individuals could make a false statement on a firearm consent form in violation of § 18.2-308.2:2(K), the proposal may increase the future state-responsible (prison) bed space needs of the Commonwealth. Existing databases do not provide sufficient detail to estimate the number of new felony convictions likely to result from enactment of the proposal. As a result, the magnitude of the impact on prison bed space needs cannot be quantified.

Local adult correctional facilities. Similarly, the proposal may increase local-responsible (jail) bed space needs; however, the magnitude of the impact cannot be determined.

Adult community corrections resources. Because the proposal could result in felony convictions and subsequent supervision requirements for an additional number of offenders, the proposal may increase the need for adult community corrections resources. Since the number of cases that may be affected cannot be determined, the potential impact on community corrections resources cannot be quantified.

Virginia's sentencing guidelines. Felony violations of § 18.2-308.2:2(K) are covered by the sentencing guidelines when this crime is the primary (most serious) offense. No adjustment to the guidelines would be necessary under the proposal.

Juvenile correctional centers. According to the Department of Juvenile Justice, the impact of the proposal on juvenile correctional center bed space needs cannot be determined.

Juvenile detention facilities. The Department of Juvenile Justice reports that the proposal's impact on the bed space needs of juvenile detention facilities cannot be determined.

Pursuant to § 30-19.1:4, the estimated amount of the necessary appropriation cannot be determined for periods of imprisonment in state adult correctional facilities; therefore, Chapter 665 of the 2015 Acts of Assembly requires the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission to assign a minimum fiscal impact of \$50,000.

Pursuant to § 30-19.1:4, the estimated amount of the necessary appropriation cannot be determined for periods of commitment to the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice.