

Department of Planning and Budget
2019 Special Session I Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: HB4003

House of Origin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Introduced	<input type="checkbox"/> Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/> Engrossed
Second House	<input type="checkbox"/> In Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled

2. Patron: Sullivan

3. Committee: Committee Referral Pending

4. Title: Firearms; removal from persons posing substantial risk; penalties.

5. Summary: Under the proposed legislation, a Commonwealth's Attorney or law enforcement officer may obtain an emergency substantial risk order from any general district, circuit, or juvenile and domestic relations court judge or magistrate to prohibit a person who poses a substantial risk of personal injury to himself or others from purchasing, possessing, or transporting a firearm. If an emergency substantial risk order is issued, a judge or magistrate may issue a search warrant to remove firearms from the individual. A court hearing must be held within 14 days of the issuance of the order to determine whether a substantial risk order should be issued for a period of up to 180 days. The proposal also provides the following:

- That persons who are subject to a substantial risk order are disqualified from obtaining a concealed handgun permit; if the person already possesses such a permit, it must be surrendered. A violation of this section is Class 1 misdemeanor.
- Any firearm taken into custody pursuant to an order issued must be returned by a law-enforcement agency to the person from whom the firearm was taken upon a court order for the return of the firearm or the expiration or dissolution of the order within five days of receiving a written request for the return of the firearm by the individual.
- Any person who knowingly and willfully makes any materially false statement or representation to a law enforcement officer or attorney for the Commonwealth as a part of the investigation would be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.
- A person who purchases, possesses, or transports a firearm while subject to an emergency substantial risk order is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. A third or subsequent Class 1 misdemeanor firearm violation is punishable as a Class 6 felony.
- Additionally, the proposed legislation expands the applicability of several existing felony offenses to include offenders prohibited by § 18.2-308.1:6 from purchasing, possessing, or transporting a firearm due to an emergency substantial risk order.

- Under the proposed modifications, individuals who sell, barter, give, or furnish a firearm to a person who is prohibited from possessing a firearm would be guilty of a Class 4 felony.
- Individuals would be ineligible to receive a firearm from a licensed firearm dealer. Under current law, purchasing a firearm with the intent to transfer it to an individual who is ineligible to purchase a firearm from a dealer is a Class 4 felony that carries a mandatory minimum term of one year. Offenders who transfer more than one firearm are subject to a mandatory minimum term of five years. Currently, it is a Class 4 felony for any person ineligible to purchase or possess a firearm to solicit, employ, or assist any person in purchasing a firearm; a violation of this subsection also carries a mandatory minimum term of five years.
- The proposal would amend the Virginia consent form provided by Virginia State Police (VSP) to add a question regarding whether the applicant is subject to an emergency substantial risk order under the proposed provisions. An individual making a materially false statement in response to this question would be subject to conviction for a Class 5 felony.
- Finally, the proposed legislation establishes a procedure by which a law enforcement officer would take custody of any firearm that is in the person's possession or that is owned by the person who is subject to the order.
- It would require the VSP to keep and maintain a computerized Substantial Risk Order Registry (Registry) for the entry of such orders, and to make the Registry available to all law enforcement and criminal agencies through the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN). The court or magistrate also must enter and transfer electronically to the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN) the identifying information of the person who is subject to the order.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes. Items 391 and 419.

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Preliminary. See Item 8 below.

7a. Expenditure Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Positions</i>	<i>Fund</i>
2019	\$0		
2020	\$592,886		General
2021	\$0		
2022	\$0		
2023	\$0		
2024	\$0		
2025	\$0		

8. Fiscal Implications: The proposed legislation would require VSP to create and maintain a Substantial Risk Order Registry (Registry) database that is to be available, upon request, to

criminal justice agencies including local law-enforcement agencies through the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN).

The bill also revises the statute governing background checks for firearm purchases by adding a question to the Virginia Firearms Transaction Record (SP-65) Form, which is completed by individuals at the time of a firearms purchase. This will require VSP to review and print the amended form and to mail it to firearms dealers, and to modify the electronic version of the form that is currently available to them.

According to VSP, the proposed legislation would have an estimated fiscal impact on their operations of \$542,886. The funding would allow VSP to create the Firearms Order Registry for \$338,800; update VSP's current firearms system (VCheck) for \$80,000; contract with a vendor to update VCIN for \$110,000; and revise the SP-65 Form, for \$14,086.

Additionally, this bill would expand the number of people who possibly could be convicted of a felony or misdemeanor. Therefore, this proposal could result in an increase in the number of persons sentenced to jail or prison.

There is not enough information available to estimate reliably how many additional inmates in jail could result from this proposal. Ultimately, the presiding judge will decide if there is to be any time served in jail; however, any increase in jail population will increase costs to the state. The Commonwealth presently pays the localities \$4.00 a day for each misdemeanor or otherwise local responsible prisoner held in a jail and \$12.00 a day for each state responsible inmate. It also funds a considerable portion of the jails' operating costs, e.g. correctional officers. The state's share of these costs on a per-prisoner, per-day basis varies from locality to locality. However, according to the Compensation Board's most recent Jail Cost Report (November 2018), the estimated total state support for local jails averaged \$33.83 per inmate, per day in FY 2017.

Due to the lack of data, the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission has concluded, pursuant to §30-19.1:4 of the Code of Virginia, that the impact of the proposed legislation on state-responsible (prison) bed space cannot be determined. In such cases, Chapter 854 of the 2019 Acts of Assembly requires that a minimum impact of \$50,000 be assigned to the bill. The impact on the Department of Juvenile Justice and local and regional jails could not be determined.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Department of State Police, Local Law enforcement agencies, Courts, Department of Corrections, Department of Juvenile Justice, local and regional jails.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No.

11. Other Comments: The proposed legislation contains an Enactment Clause appropriating \$592,886 from the balance of the general fund in fiscal year 2020 to be appropriated among the agencies and programs impacted by its provisions.