

VINCE FONG

MEMBER FOR THE 32ND ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



FACT SHEET

AB 724 – Expanding Linguistic Access to Firearm Safety Certificate Study and Testing Materials

IN BRIEF

There was a 43% increase of Asian Americans buying firearms in 2020 compared to 2019, according to the National Shooting Sports Foundation.¹ Yet California's Firearm Safety Certificate study and testing materials are offered in English and Spanish only. Supported by existing laws that have expanded linguistic access and the most recent Census data, Assembly Bill 724 would make California's official study guide and test for a Firearm Safety Certificate available in traditional Chinese, simplified Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Korean, and Armenian.

BACKGROUND & ISSUE

In California, every civilian who wishes to acquire or purchase a firearm must first obtain a Firearm Safety Certificate, which requires a passing score of at least 75% on a written, objective test that covers laws, regulations, and safety practices, including the proper handling and storage of firearms.² The idea behind this requirement is that a qualified adult should appreciate the risks of firearms ownership, understand applicable laws and regulations, and have the requisite knowledge to become a responsible firearms owner.

The Bureau of Firearms publishes and updates California's official study guide on the Office of Attorney General's website.³ This guide educates the public about the legal responsibilities and risks of firearms ownership and helps prevent accidents and misuse. According to Every Town for Gun Safety, "It is critical that gun buyers and permit applicants are given safety information. Requiring gun dealers to inform purchasers of the risks associated with firearms allows buyers to make educated decisions about owning and storing guns and is a meaningful step towards preventing gun violence."⁴

Recognizing that education and testing are essential for making an informed decision about firearms ownership and learning how to use and possess firearms safely, the official study and testing materials for a Firearms Safety Certificate should be made available in multiple languages, reflecting California's linguistic diversity.

Over 43% of households in California speak a language other than English.⁵ "[T]he five languages other than English that are most widely spoken at home are Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Korean. They include approximately 3.5 million of the 3.8 million Californians with limited or no English proficiency."⁶ For written languages "the top seven non-English languages used by limited English proficient adults in California according to the 2019 American Community Survey by the United States Census Bureau ... are Spanish, traditional Chinese, simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Korean, and Armenian."⁷

SOLUTION

AB 724 would amend Penal Code sections 31630 and 31640 to make the Firearms Safety Certificate study guide and test available in traditional Chinese, simplified Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Korean, and Armenian. By expanding linguistic access, this bill supports the inclusion of all Californians, encourages informed firearms ownership, and promotes public safety.

SUPPORT

Conference of California Bar Associations – Sponsor

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¹ <https://www.nssf.org/articles/nssf-retailer-surveys-indicate-5-4-million-first-time-gun-buyers-in-2021>.

² Penal Code, §§ 31610-31645.

³ <https://oag.ca.gov/firearms/forms>.

⁴ <https://www.everytown.org/solutions/educate-gun-owners>.

⁵ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/CA>.

⁶ Civil Code, § 1632(a)(3).

⁷ Unemployment Insurance Code, § 316(a).