

Calif. gun sales up ahead of new gun control limits

By Associated Press

With six new gun control bills signed by Gov. Jerry Brown in July, sales of semi-automatic rifles have more than doubled in California over last year.

The *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* reports that the California Department of Justice shows 364,643 semi-automatic rifles had been sold by Dec. 9 whereas 153,931 rifles were sold last year.

Rifles with bullet buttons for the quick swap of ammunition magazines and other soon-to-be banned features have also skyrocketed. Statewide sales are up 40 percent by early December.

The new gun controls reclassified semi-automatic rifles that have certain features as assault weapons. The features added to the prohibited list include a protruding or forward pistol grip, a thumbhole stock, a folding stock or a flash suppressor. Assault weapons have been banned in California since 1989.

Nearly 1 million firearms were purchased in California as of Dec. 9, the most recent state data available, compared to more than 700,000 guns sold in all of 2015. Sales have likely soared beyond 1 million guns since then, the newspaper reported.

Steven Serna came into Pacific Outfitters sporting goods store in Ukiah last week to buy a semi-automatic rifle before new gun control legislation limits the gun's features in California.

He wanted to purchase an AK-47 rifle but there were none to be found at the store. The deer hunter lamented that he should have purchased one earlier this year.

Todd Lyly also visited the store last week to talk with his friends behind the gun sales counter about the new laws.

Lyly said he will convert his weapons so they are compliant with the new regulations, most likely by installing a fixed stock. But he said it's a superficial change that he expects will mostly impact law-abiding people and not violent criminals already disinclined to follow the law.

"It's frustrating," Lyly said.

California lawmakers pushed for the new gun controls after a mass shooting in San Bernardino last year. A married couple who were armed with AR15 rifles and 9mm pistols shot and killed 14 people and wounded 22 others at a county health department holiday party. Authorities said they were inspired by foreign terrorist groups.