

## 2023 Legislative Session Summary: **Gun Safety**

Issue Team Coordinator: [Cynthia Stewart](#)

Advocate: [Pat Griffith](#)

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When the session ended, five bills that League was following had passed, and most have been signed by the Governor as of this writing. Four of the bills will enhance gun safety; the other was not specifically safety related. Some of the bills that failed had provisions incorporated into the bills that passed, so there was a net improvement in gun safety, though sadly, the bill prohibiting open carry of certain weapons in public parks and public hospitals did not progress.

### **Bills that Passed Both Houses**

**[HB 1143](#) Concerning requirements for the purchase or transfer of firearms**, would require an approved safety training course within five years, fingerprinting, and background check in addition to a 10-day waiting period before a dealer can hand over a firearm. The purchaser would need to complete a background check, show that an approved safety training course has been completed. A waiting period of 10 days from the application date would be required before the dealer would hand over the firearm. These requirements are similar to those for a concealed weapons permit. Fourteen states have similar requirements and have found that they have reduced fatalities by 14%. The requirements could also interrupt suicide attempts, which are often impulsive decisions. Suicides constitute 75% of gun deaths in Washington. Opponents say the requirements violate Second Amendment protections. **HB 1143** passed the House with a vote of 52 to 44. It passed the Senate with amendments on April 7 with a vote of 28 to 18. The House concurred with the Senate amendments, and the bill has now been signed by the Governor.

**[HB 1240](#) Establishing firearms-related safety measures to increase public safety**, would essentially ban the manufacture, distribution, and purchase of assault-type weapons which have been used in most mass shootings. The weapons specified in the bill are variations of military weapons designed to kill as many persons as possible in the shortest time period. Washington would become the tenth state to ban assault weapons if the bill passes. This is the sixth year a ban on assault weapons has been proposed by the Attorney General. This bill passed the House with a vote of 55 to 42. It passed the Senate on April 8 with a vote of 27 to 21, with amendments. The House concurred with Senate amendments on April 19, and the bill has now been signed by the Governor.

**HB 1562 Reducing the risks of lethality and other harm associated with gun violence, gender-based violence, and other types of violence.** This bill concerns procedures regarding restoration of right to purchase firearms after period of revocation. It passed the House with a vote of 51-46. It passed the Senate with amendments on a vote of 28 to 21 on April 11. On April 13, the House concurred with Senate amendments with a vote of 51 to 45, and the bill has gone to the Governor for signature.

**HB 1600 Providing access to sealed juvenile records for firearm purposes** would allow any law enforcement agency access to sealed juvenile records but only for background check purposes regarding prior convictions and mental health checks before a person could purchase or transfer a firearm. This bill passed the House on February 27 with a vote of 95-0 and passed the Senate on April 6 with amendments by a vote of 47-0. On April 13, the House concurred with the Senate amendments and the bill has now been signed by the Governor.

**SB 5078 Protecting public safety by establishing duties of firearm industry members.** It would allow individuals to sue gun manufacturers to sue for harm caused by a firearm and authorizes the Attorney General to declare a product a public nuisance. This bill passed the Senate as a substitute on March 2 with a vote of 28 to 21. It passed the House on April 10 with amendments on a vote of 57-41. The Senate concurred with House amendments and the bill has now been signed by the Governor.

## **Bills That Died**

**HB 1144/SB 5232 Enhancing requirements for the purchase or transfer of firearms,** would require background checks go through the Washington State Patrol rather than local law enforcement agencies. **HB 1144** had a public hearing but there was no action taken at the subsequent executive session. **SB 5232** passed the Senate Law & Justice Committee and was referred to the Senate Ways & Means Committee but never had a public hearing in that committee.

**SB 5211 Concerning requirements for the purchase or transfer of firearms,** a companion bill to HB 1143, above, would require an approved safety training course within five years, fingerprinting, and background check in addition to a 10-day waiting period before a dealer can hand over a firearm. These requirements are similar to those for a concealed weapons permit. Fourteen states have similar requirements and have found that they have reduced fatalities by 14%. The requirements could also interrupt suicide attempts, which are often impulsive decisions. Suicides constitute 75% of gun deaths in Washington. Opponents say the requirements violate Second Amendment protections. This bill never had a public hearing and therefore did not pass out of the policy committee by the cutoff date. But its companion bill passed.

**[HB 1178/SB 5446](#) Concerning local government authority to regulate firearms**, would grant local government authority to regulate firearms and where they can be present. This would change the current pre-emption of firearms regulation. Opponents say that the bill would create a patchwork of regulations and gun owners would need to research restrictions in multiple jurisdictions. On the Pro side, different cities and towns have differing conditions regarding use of firearms. **HB 1178** had a public hearing in the House Civil Rights and Judiciary Committee on January 27 and executive session on February 3, but no action was taken. **SB 5446** did not get a public hearing and has died.

**[HB 1195](#) Prohibiting the open carry of certain weapons in public parks and public hospitals**  
This bill had a public hearing on January 18. No action was taken in executive session on January 27.

**[SB 5265](#) Establishing firearms-related safety measures to increase public safety**, the companion bill to HB 1240, above, would essentially ban the manufacture, distribution, and purchase of assault-type weapons which have been used in most mass shootings. The weapons specified in the bill are variations of military weapons designed to kill as many persons as possible in the shortest time period. Washington would become the tenth state to ban assault weapons if the bill passes. This is the sixth year a ban on assault weapons has been proposed by the Attorney General. **SB 5265** never had a public hearing in the Law & Justice Committee and died. But its companion bill, HB 1240 did pass and has been signed by the Governor.

## How You Can Be Involved

- Respond to Action Alerts in the legislative newsletter. These will primarily appear in the section of the newsletter related to Gun Safety
- Contacting Cynthia Stewart, [cstewart@lwvwa.org](mailto:cstewart@lwvwa.org).