

Weekly Legislative Update: **Gun Safety**

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Gun safety bills are moving though some have been rescheduled. Still no bills on child access prevention have been filed despite a high school student killed at Ingraham High School and a six-year-old in Virginia shooting his teacher. Both these incidents involved guns unsecured from home. Seventy-six percent of school shootings have involved unsecured firearms from home. Ethan's Law, passed by the US House of Representatives, deals with child access protection and encourages states to enact secure storage requirements.

The House Civil Rights & Judiciary Committee has heard heated testimony on five bills we support, listed below and held executive sessions for all five on January 27. Action was taken on HB 1240 and HB 1143 in executive session; but not on the other bills.

You can still contact your Representatives [here](#) and let them know you want them to keep gun safety a top priority and that HB 1143, 1144, and 1240 address our most pressing gun safety issues by requiring a permit, including safety training and a waiting period BEFORE a gun dealer releases a weapon to a buyer. Fourteen states have a similar requirement and have found it effective in reducing gun fatalities, including suicides. Though a federal law banning assault weapons is a goal, a state ban will go far until a federal ban is possible. Mass shootings were 70% less frequent when the federal assault weapons ban was in effect.

[HB 1143/SB 5232](#) 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. 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** was referred as a Substitute to the House Appropriations Committee but no public hearing has been scheduled yet. **SB 5232 is scheduled for public hearing in the Senate Law & Justice Committee at 8:00 am on February 9. Sign in PRO [here](#) before 7:00 a on February 9.**

[HB 1144](#) 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. **No action was taken in executive session.**

HB 1178 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. No action was taken in the executive session on February 3.

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.

HB 1240/SB 5265 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. **HB 1240** was moved from the committee as a substitute bill with a Do Pass recommendation and is now in the House Rules Committee. The amendment allows a Tacoma manufacturer to continue manufacture of accessories to be sold out of state. **SB 5265** has not had a public hearing.

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 had a public hearing on February 1 and is scheduled for executive session in the House Civil Rights and Judiciary Committee on February 7.

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.