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SENATE BILL 5552

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State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Senators Pedersen, Zeiger, Frockt, Takko, O'Ban, Fain, and Hobbs

1 AN ACT Relating to background checks for firearms sales or  
2 transfers, but only with respect to clarifying that the term firearm  
3 does not include flare guns and construction tools, clarifying that  
4 the term transfer does not include transfers between an employer and  
5 employee for lawful purposes in the ordinary course of business,  
6 expanding the family member exemption to include loans and parents-  
7 in-law and siblings-in-law, providing an exemption for temporary  
8 transfers for the purpose of preventing suicide or self-inflicted  
9 great bodily harm, and providing an exemption for temporary transfers  
10 where the transferee and the firearm are in the presence of the  
11 transferor; and amending RCW 9.41.010 and 9.41.113.

12 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

13 **Sec. 1.** RCW 9.41.010 and 2015 c 1 s 2 are each amended to read  
14 as follows:

15 Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in  
16 this section apply throughout this chapter.

17 (1) "Antique firearm" means a firearm or replica of a firearm not  
18 designed or redesigned for using rim fire or conventional center fire  
19 ignition with fixed ammunition and manufactured in or before 1898,  
20 including any matchlock, flintlock, percussion cap, or similar type  
21 of ignition system and also any firearm using fixed ammunition

1 manufactured in or before 1898, for which ammunition is no longer  
2 manufactured in the United States and is not readily available in the  
3 ordinary channels of commercial trade.

4 (2) "Barrel length" means the distance from the bolt face of a  
5 closed action down the length of the axis of the bore to the crown of  
6 the muzzle, or in the case of a barrel with attachments to the end of  
7 any legal device permanently attached to the end of the muzzle.

8 (3) "Crime of violence" means:

9 (a) Any of the following felonies, as now existing or hereafter  
10 amended: Any felony defined under any law as a class A felony or an  
11 attempt to commit a class A felony, criminal solicitation of or  
12 criminal conspiracy to commit a class A felony, manslaughter in the  
13 first degree, manslaughter in the second degree, indecent liberties  
14 if committed by forcible compulsion, kidnapping in the second degree,  
15 arson in the second degree, assault in the second degree, assault of  
16 a child in the second degree, extortion in the first degree, burglary  
17 in the second degree, residential burglary, and robbery in the second  
18 degree;

19 (b) Any conviction for a felony offense in effect at any time  
20 prior to June 6, 1996, which is comparable to a felony classified as  
21 a crime of violence in (a) of this subsection; and

22 (c) Any federal or out-of-state conviction for an offense  
23 comparable to a felony classified as a crime of violence under (a) or  
24 (b) of this subsection.

25 (4) "Dealer" means a person engaged in the business of selling  
26 firearms at wholesale or retail who has, or is required to have, a  
27 federal firearms license under 18 U.S.C. Sec. 923(a). A person who  
28 does not have, and is not required to have, a federal firearms  
29 license under 18 U.S.C. Sec. 923(a), is not a dealer if that person  
30 makes only occasional sales, exchanges, or purchases of firearms for  
31 the enhancement of a personal collection or for a hobby, or sells all  
32 or part of his or her personal collection of firearms.

33 (5) "Family or household member" means "family" or "household  
34 member" as used in RCW 10.99.020.

35 (6) "Felony" means any felony offense under the laws of this  
36 state or any federal or out-of-state offense comparable to a felony  
37 offense under the laws of this state.

38 (7) "Felony firearm offender" means a person who has previously  
39 been convicted or found not guilty by reason of insanity in this  
40 state of any felony firearm offense. A person is not a felony firearm

1 offender under this chapter if any and all qualifying offenses have  
2 been the subject of an expungement, pardon, annulment, certificate,  
3 or rehabilitation, or other equivalent procedure based on a finding  
4 of the rehabilitation of the person convicted or a pardon, annulment,  
5 or other equivalent procedure based on a finding of innocence.

6 (8) "Felony firearm offense" means:

7 (a) Any felony offense that is a violation of this chapter;

8 (b) A violation of RCW 9A.36.045;

9 (c) A violation of RCW 9A.56.300;

10 (d) A violation of RCW 9A.56.310;

11 (e) Any felony offense if the offender was armed with a firearm  
12 in the commission of the offense.

13 (9) "Firearm" means a weapon or device from which a projectile or  
14 projectiles may be fired by an explosive such as gunpowder. "Firearm"  
15 does not include a flare gun or other pyrotechnic visual distress  
16 signaling device, or a powder-actuated tool or other device designed  
17 solely to be used for construction purposes.

18 (10) "Gun" has the same meaning as firearm.

19 (11) "Law enforcement officer" includes a general authority  
20 Washington peace officer as defined in RCW 10.93.020, or a specially  
21 commissioned Washington peace officer as defined in RCW 10.93.020.  
22 "Law enforcement officer" also includes a limited authority  
23 Washington peace officer as defined in RCW 10.93.020 if such officer  
24 is duly authorized by his or her employer to carry a concealed  
25 pistol.

26 (12) "Lawful permanent resident" has the same meaning afforded a  
27 person "lawfully admitted for permanent residence" in 8 U.S.C. Sec.  
28 1101(a)(20).

29 (13) "Licensed dealer" means a person who is federally licensed  
30 under 18 U.S.C. Sec. 923(a).

31 (14) "Loaded" means:

32 (a) There is a cartridge in the chamber of the firearm;

33 (b) Cartridges are in a clip that is locked in place in the  
34 firearm;

35 (c) There is a cartridge in the cylinder of the firearm, if the  
36 firearm is a revolver;

37 (d) There is a cartridge in the tube or magazine that is inserted  
38 in the action; or

39 (e) There is a ball in the barrel and the firearm is capped or  
40 primed if the firearm is a muzzle loader.

1 (15) "Machine gun" means any firearm known as a machine gun,  
2 mechanical rifle, submachine gun, or any other mechanism or  
3 instrument not requiring that the trigger be pressed for each shot  
4 and having a reservoir clip, disc, drum, belt, or other separable  
5 mechanical device for storing, carrying, or supplying ammunition  
6 which can be loaded into the firearm, mechanism, or instrument, and  
7 fired therefrom at the rate of five or more shots per second.

8 (16) "Nonimmigrant alien" means a person defined as such in 8  
9 U.S.C. Sec. 1101(a)(15).

10 (17) "Person" means any individual, corporation, company,  
11 association, firm, partnership, club, organization, society, joint  
12 stock company, or other legal entity.

13 (18) "Pistol" means any firearm with a barrel less than sixteen  
14 inches in length, or is designed to be held and fired by the use of a  
15 single hand.

16 (19) "Rifle" means a weapon designed or redesigned, made or  
17 remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder and designed or  
18 redesigned, made or remade, and intended to use the energy of the  
19 explosive in a fixed metallic cartridge to fire only a single  
20 projectile through a rifled bore for each single pull of the trigger.

21 (20) "Sale" and "sell" mean the actual approval of the delivery  
22 of a firearm in consideration of payment or promise of payment.

23 (21) "Serious offense" means any of the following felonies or a  
24 felony attempt to commit any of the following felonies, as now  
25 existing or hereafter amended:

26 (a) Any crime of violence;

27 (b) Any felony violation of the uniform controlled substances  
28 act, chapter 69.50 RCW, that is classified as a class B felony or  
29 that has a maximum term of imprisonment of at least ten years;

30 (c) Child molestation in the second degree;

31 (d) Incest when committed against a child under age fourteen;

32 (e) Indecent liberties;

33 (f) Leading organized crime;

34 (g) Promoting prostitution in the first degree;

35 (h) Rape in the third degree;

36 (i) Drive-by shooting;

37 (j) Sexual exploitation;

38 (k) Vehicular assault, when caused by the operation or driving of  
39 a vehicle by a person while under the influence of intoxicating

1 liquor or any drug or by the operation or driving of a vehicle in a  
2 reckless manner;

3 (l) Vehicular homicide, when proximately caused by the driving of  
4 any vehicle by any person while under the influence of intoxicating  
5 liquor or any drug as defined by RCW 46.61.502, or by the operation  
6 of any vehicle in a reckless manner;

7 (m) Any other class B felony offense with a finding of sexual  
8 motivation, as "sexual motivation" is defined under RCW 9.94A.030;

9 (n) Any other felony with a deadly weapon verdict under RCW  
10 9.94A.825;

11 (o) Any felony offense in effect at any time prior to June 6,  
12 1996, that is comparable to a serious offense, or any federal or out-  
13 of-state conviction for an offense that under the laws of this state  
14 would be a felony classified as a serious offense; or

15 (p) Any felony conviction under RCW 9.41.115.

16 (22) "Short-barreled rifle" means a rifle having one or more  
17 barrels less than sixteen inches in length and any weapon made from a  
18 rifle by any means of modification if such modified weapon has an  
19 overall length of less than twenty-six inches.

20 (23) "Short-barreled shotgun" means a shotgun having one or more  
21 barrels less than eighteen inches in length and any weapon made from  
22 a shotgun by any means of modification if such modified weapon has an  
23 overall length of less than twenty-six inches.

24 (24) "Shotgun" means a weapon with one or more barrels, designed  
25 or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the  
26 shoulder and designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to  
27 use the energy of the explosive in a fixed shotgun shell to fire  
28 through a smooth bore either a number of ball shot or a single  
29 projectile for each single pull of the trigger.

30 (25) "Transfer" means the intended delivery of a firearm to  
31 another person without consideration of payment or promise of payment  
32 including, but not limited to, gifts and loans. "Transfer" does not  
33 include the delivery of a firearm owned or leased by an employer to,  
34 or return of such a firearm by, any of the employer's employees for  
35 lawful purposes in the ordinary course of business.

36 (26) "Unlicensed person" means any person who is not a licensed  
37 dealer under this chapter.

38 **Sec. 2.** RCW 9.41.113 and 2015 c 1 s 3 are each amended to read  
39 as follows:

1 (1) All firearm sales or transfers, in whole or part in this  
2 state including without limitation a sale or transfer where either  
3 the purchaser or seller or transferee or transferor is in Washington,  
4 shall be subject to background checks unless specifically exempted by  
5 state or federal law. The background check requirement applies to all  
6 sales or transfers including, but not limited to, sales and transfers  
7 through a licensed dealer, at gun shows, online, and between  
8 unlicensed persons.

9 (2) No person shall sell or transfer a firearm unless:

10 (a) The person is a licensed dealer;

11 (b) The purchaser or transferee is a licensed dealer; or

12 (c) The requirements of subsection (3) of this section are met.

13 (3) Where neither party to a prospective firearms transaction is  
14 a licensed dealer, the parties to the transaction shall complete the  
15 sale or transfer through a licensed dealer as follows:

16 (a) The seller or transferor shall deliver the firearm to a  
17 licensed dealer to process the sale or transfer as if it is selling  
18 or transferring the firearm from its inventory to the purchaser or  
19 transferee, except that the unlicensed seller or transferor may  
20 remove the firearm from the business premises of the licensed dealer  
21 while the background check is being conducted. If the seller or  
22 transferor removes the firearm from the business premises of the  
23 licensed dealer while the background check is being conducted, the  
24 purchaser or transferee and the seller or transferor shall return to  
25 the business premises of the licensed dealer and the seller or  
26 transferor shall again deliver the firearm to the licensed dealer  
27 prior to completing the sale or transfer.

28 (b) Except as provided in (a) of this subsection, the licensed  
29 dealer shall comply with all requirements of federal and state law  
30 that would apply if the licensed dealer were selling or transferring  
31 the firearm from its inventory to the purchaser or transferee,  
32 including but not limited to conducting a background check on the  
33 prospective purchaser or transferee in accordance with federal and  
34 state law requirements and fulfilling all federal and state  
35 recordkeeping requirements.

36 (c) The purchaser or transferee must complete, sign, and submit  
37 all federal, state, and local forms necessary to process the required  
38 background check to the licensed dealer conducting the background  
39 check.

1 (d) If the results of the background check indicate that the  
2 purchaser or transferee is ineligible to possess a firearm, then the  
3 licensed dealer shall return the firearm to the seller or transferor.

4 (e) The licensed dealer may charge a fee that reflects the fair  
5 market value of the administrative costs and efforts incurred by the  
6 licensed dealer for facilitating the sale or transfer of the firearm.

7 (4) This section does not apply to:

8 (a) A transfer between immediate family members, which for this  
9 subsection shall be limited to spouses, domestic partners, parents,  
10 parents-in-law, children, siblings, siblings-in-law, grandparents,  
11 grandchildren, nieces, nephews, first cousins, aunts, and uncles,  
12 that is a bona fide gift or loan;

13 (b) The sale or transfer of an antique firearm;

14 (c) A temporary transfer of possession of a firearm if such  
15 transfer is necessary to prevent imminent death or great bodily harm  
16 to the person to whom the firearm is transferred if:

17 (i) The temporary transfer only lasts as long as immediately  
18 necessary to prevent such imminent death or great bodily harm; and

19 (ii) The person to whom the firearm is transferred is not  
20 prohibited from possessing firearms under state or federal law;

21 (d) A temporary transfer of possession of a firearm if: (i) The  
22 temporary transfer is intended to prevent suicide or self-inflicted  
23 great bodily harm; (ii) the temporary transfer lasts only as long as  
24 reasonably necessary to prevent imminent death or great bodily harm;  
25 and (iii) the person to whom the firearm is transferred is not  
26 prohibited from possessing firearms under state or federal law;

27 (e) Any law enforcement or corrections agency and, to the extent  
28 the person is acting within the course and scope of his or her  
29 employment or official duties, any law enforcement or corrections  
30 officer, United States marshal, member of the armed forces of the  
31 United States or the national guard, or federal official;

32 (~~(e)~~) (f) A federally licensed gunsmith who receives a firearm  
33 solely for the purposes of service or repair, or the return of the  
34 firearm to its owner by the federally licensed gunsmith;

35 (~~(f)~~) (g) The temporary transfer of a firearm (i) between  
36 spouses or domestic partners; (ii) if the temporary transfer occurs,  
37 and the firearm is kept at all times, at an established shooting  
38 range authorized by the governing body of the jurisdiction in which  
39 such range is located; (iii) if the temporary transfer occurs and the  
40 transferee's possession of the firearm is exclusively at a lawful

1 organized competition involving the use of a firearm, or while  
2 participating in or practicing for a performance by an organized  
3 group that uses firearms as a part of the performance; (iv) to a  
4 person who is under eighteen years of age for lawful hunting,  
5 sporting, or educational purposes while under the direct supervision  
6 and control of a responsible adult who is not prohibited from  
7 possessing firearms; ~~((e))~~ (v) under circumstances in which the  
8 transferee and the firearm remain in the presence of the transferor;  
9 or (vi) while hunting if the hunting is legal in all places where the  
10 person to whom the firearm is transferred possesses the firearm and  
11 the person to whom the firearm is transferred has completed all  
12 training and holds all licenses or permits required for such hunting,  
13 provided that any temporary transfer allowed by this subsection is  
14 permitted only if the person to whom the firearm is transferred is  
15 not prohibited from possessing firearms under state or federal law;  
16 or

17 ~~((g))~~ (h) A person who (i) acquired a firearm other than a  
18 pistol by operation of law upon the death of the former owner of the  
19 firearm or (ii) acquired a pistol by operation of law upon the death  
20 of the former owner of the pistol within the preceding sixty days. At  
21 the end of the sixty-day period, the person must either have lawfully  
22 transferred the pistol or must have contacted the department of  
23 licensing to notify the department that he or she has possession of  
24 the pistol and intends to retain possession of the pistol, in  
25 compliance with all federal and state laws.

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