

2017-18 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

STRENGTHENING LAWS

Dangerous Access Prevention

Guns taken from homes by children or those prohibited from possessing firearms have been at the heart of some of our state's most tragic gun violence incidents. These include the 2016 Burlington mall shooting, the Marysville-Pilchuk high school tragedy, the 2008 Isaac Zamora rampage, and the 2012 accidental shooting of elementary student Amina Bowman. More than 75% of youth suicide attempts occur with guns found in the home and 65% of school shooters obtained their weapons within their own or a relative's home. Dangerous Access Prevention builds upon successful laws in Florida, California and 28 other states. This policy incentivizes safe storage by creating criminal liability, depending on the severity of the incident, if a child or anyone prohibited from possessing a gun uses an unsafely stored firearm to harm themselves or someone else.

Enhanced Assault Weapon Background Checks

Assault weapons are military-designed weapons created to kill humans quickly and efficiently. These firearms have been used in a number of high-profile shootings, including the deaths of four teenagers in Mukilteo by a deeply troubled 19-year-old, the Orlando Pulse nightclub shooting, and the 2012 Sandy Hook tragedy. Studies show that shootings where assault weapons or large capacity ammunition magazines were used resulted in 135% more people shot and 57% more killed, compared with other mass shootings. In Washington, it is easier to buy an assault weapon than it is to purchase a handgun because assault weapons are treated the same as hunting rifles. The Enhanced Assault Weapon Background Check bill is built upon Washington state's Concealed Pistol License background check standards; it will raise the age of purchase to 21 years, require safety training, and annual background check renewal.

IMPLEMENTING & ENFORCING LAWS

Law Enforcement and Victim Notification

In 2016, 3,259 people prohibited from possessing a firearm attempted to buy a gun. But in many cases, this information is not transmitted to law enforcement, prosecutors or victims of crime. The Law Enforcement & Victim Safety legislation will (1) create standards for investigating and prosecuting failed background checks; (2) increase officer safety by giving law enforcement real-time access to information about whether someone has attempted an illegal purchase; and (3) give domestic violence and other crime survivors the ability to receive notifications when an offender illegally attempts to purchase a firearm so they can take proper precautions to keep themselves safe.

Keep Crime Guns Off the Street

Across the state, many law enforcement agencies choose to destroy confiscated crime guns rather than put them back on the street via auction. Under current law, the Washington State Patrol must auction or trade confiscated firearms. This Washington State Patrol Request Legislation helps keep our communities safer by giving the WSP the ability to destroy confiscated crime guns.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Suicide Crisis Prevention

Under current law, people who have been involuntarily committed consecutively for longer than 14 days may not possess firearms. However, individuals subject to 72-hour involuntary holds for mental health, may still legally purchase firearms even though national studies show that people who have been subject to 72-hour mental health hold are at great risk of suicide. One study showed that 75% of gun-eligible people who used a gun to complete suicide and 33% of those arrested for a violent gun crime had a 72-hour involuntary hold record. The Suicide Crisis Prevention bill will help prevent suicide and violent crises by temporarily restricting access to firearms for people who have been held for mental health treatment for 72-hours.

Voluntary Waiver

Many people realize they could be at risk of future crisis. Today, a person can voluntarily admit themselves to a hospital and seek out mental health support but there isn't a clear path to ensure they won't be able to purchase a firearm in a moment of crisis. This bill would give people the ability to voluntarily have their names listed on the prohibited purchaser list. The policy includes identity protection and a process that allows the person to restore their gun rights.

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Resources

Access to appropriate, effective, mental health care and resources can mean the difference of life and death to someone in crisis. We will be working with partners to advocate for more resources for mental health services and evidence-based suicide prevention education.