



## Permit-to-Purchase

[HB 1902](#) (Rep. Berry) / [SB 6004](#) (Sen. Liias )

Establishing a permit-to-purchase system in Washington State would ensure that background checks occur before a firearm purchase as well as at the point of sale. This life-saving policy has been shown to lead to lower rates of firearm-related death, lower rates of guns diverted to criminals shortly after retail sale, and lower rates of guns exported to criminals in other states. Washington needs to establish a permit-to-purchase law to ensure that firearms are bought and used by responsible gun owners.

### What the Research Says:

- When Connecticut passed a permit-to-purchase law, its firearm homicide rate decreased by 28%, and its firearm suicide rate decreased by 33%.<sup>1</sup>
- Research shows that if Washington had adopted a permit-to-purchase law when Connecticut did in 1995, there would have been an estimated 1,205 fewer gun deaths in Washington over the first 10 years of implementation.
- Conversely, when Missouri repealed its permit-to-purchase law, its firearm homicide rate increased by 47%, and its firearm suicide rate increased by 24%.<sup>2</sup>
- A study of licensing laws across 80 large urban counties found that these laws are associated with an 11% decrease in firearm homicides.<sup>3</sup>
- Permit-to-purchase laws that require an in-person application or fingerprinting also help prevent mass shootings. States with these laws have 56% fewer fatal mass shootings.<sup>4</sup>
- States that have permit-to-purchase laws see fewer police shot in the line of duty with handguns.<sup>5</sup>

### Washington Landscape:

Washington has both a safety training requirement and a 10-day waiting period for purchasing all firearms. However, there is no permit to purchase a firearm. This bill would require an application to the Washington State Patrol that includes a complete set of fingerprints and proof of completing an in person firearms training. Additionally, Washington State Patrol would perform a more robust background check than currently exists in our state, providing an extra layer of safety before a firearm purchase has occurred.

### In Other States:

While many states have some version of enhanced background checks and other purchasing requirements, only six states have a comprehensive permitting process like the one being introduced, and five states have enacted a permit-to-purchase requirement for select kinds of firearms.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Alexander D. McCourt, et al. "Purchaser Licensing, Point-of-Sale Background Check Laws, and Firearm Homicide and Suicide in 4 US States, 1985–2017." \*American Journal of Public Health\* 110, no. 10 \(2020\): 1546–1552](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Alexander D. McCourt, et al. "Purchaser Licensing, Point-of-Sale Background Check Laws, and Firearm Homicide and Suicide in 4 US States, 1985–2017." \*American Journal of Public Health\* 110, no. 10 \(2020\): 1546–1552](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Cassandra K. Crifasi, et al. "Association Between Firearm Laws and Homicide in Urban Counties." \*Journal of Urban Health\* 95, no. 3 \(2018\): 383–390](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Daniel W. Webster, et al. "Evidence Concerning the Regulation of Firearms Design, Sale, and Carrying on Fatal Mass Shootings in the United States." \*Criminology & Public Policy\* 19, no. 1 \(2020\): 171–212.](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Cassandra K. Crifasi, et al. "Effects of state-level policy changes on homicide and nonfatal shootings of law enforcement officers" \(2016\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> <https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/law/background-check-and-or-purchase-permit/>