



## Firearm Sensitive Place Restrictions

[SB 5444](#) (Sen. Valdez)

Washington State can help make our communities safer by creating risk-based restrictions on firearms in sensitive places like parks, libraries, transit centers, aquariums and zoos.

Washington State has already taken some important steps by restricting firearms in places like schools, childcare centers, bars and during protests and demonstrations. SB 5444 will extend restrictions to other sensitive places, like parks where children are likely to be present, libraries, aquariums and zoos. Over the past several years, a number of empirical studies have shown that crime is higher when more people carry firearms in public places. ***Since 1966, the overwhelming majority—nearly 90%—of all mass shootings resulting in six or more deaths have occurred wholly or partly in locations where civilian guns were allowed*** or there was armed security or law enforcement present.<sup>1</sup> The presence of a firearm has the potential to increase the lethality of otherwise mundane situations {examples - road rage, disputes we've seen in WA} - this risk is heightened because of the additional risk that a child will access a firearm and unintentionally harm themselves or other people. States that have relaxed their firearm laws to allow firearms in most places have, according to one study, seen crime increase substantially —13 to 15 percent higher—10 years after the laws were adopted than it would have been, had those states not adopted those laws.<sup>2</sup>

### **SB 5444 Proposes to Extend Restrictions to the Following Locations:**

#### *Parks, Libraries, Transit Centers, Aquariums and Zoos*

Extending our limits on firearms to sensitive places where children are likely to be present, like parks, libraries, aquariums and zoos is consistent with steps Washington State and other states have taken. Washington State currently protects children by limiting firearms in K-12 schools and early learning centers. Making sure our children are also safe in their neighborhood playground, library or the zoo just makes sense.

#### *Local Government Facilities*

Allowing **SB 5444s restrictions on firearms in local government buildings is consistent with federal laws prohibiting firearms in most federal facilities.** This includes buildings or parts of buildings owned or leased by the federal government, where federal employees are regularly present for the purpose of performing their official duties. Examples include federal courthouses, Social Security offices, and certain areas within VA hospitals. Typically, states prohibit guns completely or partially in places where the presence of guns is particularly dangerous, such as where people consume alcohol, where tensions can flare, such as at sporting events or airports, or where there is a high danger that the presence of guns might chill First Amendment rights, such as at polling places and legislative buildings.

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<sup>1</sup><https://aiffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/guns-in-public/location-restrictions/>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.nber.org/papers/w23510>