

VETO MESSAGE ON HB 2420-S

March 30, 1996

To the Honorable Speaker and Members,

The House of Representatives of the State of Washington
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to sections 7 and 12, Substitute House Bill No. 2420 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to possession of firearms;"

Substitute House Bill No. 2420 makes a number of substantive and technical changes to state law relating to the sale, transfer, and possession of firearms. This legislation is the result of a great deal of hard work by legislators and others concerned with this important issue. I commend their efforts.

Under current law, if a person is issued a concealed pistol license and it is later determined that the person was ineligible, the person is required to lawfully transfer any pistols purchased during the period he or she possessed the license. These requirements are based on good public policy aimed at reducing firearms' possession by people with a criminal history. Section 7 of this bill removes these requirements. This is a step backward in protecting the public against potentially dangerous people.

Section 12 of Substitute House Bill No. 2420 amends the prohibition against the possession, ownership, sale, purchase, and manufacture of machine guns, short-barreled shotguns, short-barreled rifles, and the parts for these weapons. Current law exempts federal, state, county, or municipal law enforcement agencies from this prohibition. Section 12 expands this exemption to include employees of these agencies. As drafted, this section would allow private individuals to own machine guns in their homes. This is totally unacceptable. Public safety demands stringent control over these dangerous weapons, with few and carefully tailored exceptions.

For these reasons, I have vetoed sections 7 and 12 of Substitute House Bill No. 2420.

With the exception of sections 7 and 12, Substitute House Bill No. 2420 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Lowry
Governor