

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1716

As Reported By House Committee On:
Law & Justice

Title: An act relating to records of pistol purchases or transfers.

Brief Description: Eliminating the authority of the department of licensing to keep records of pistol purchases or transfers.

Sponsors: Representative McMorris.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Law & Justice: 3/4/97 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Sheahan, Chairman; McDonald, Vice Chairman; Sterk, Vice Chairman; Costa, Ranking Minority Member; Carrell; Cody; Kenney; Lambert; Lantz; Radcliff; Sherstad and Skinner.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Constantine, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Bill Perry (786-7123).

Background: Under the state's firearms law, records of certain transactions involving firearms are maintained by the Department of Licensing (DOL).

Among the records that the DOL maintains are applications for concealed pistol licenses, applications for alien firearm licenses, applications to purchase pistols, and records of pistol transfers. Generally, these records are exempt from the public records law and may be released only to law enforcement agencies or the Department of Corrections.

Issuers of pistol or alien firearm licenses and dealers who sell or transfer pistols are required to send copies of the records of these transactions to the DOL. Dealers are also required to send copies of records of pistol sales to the local law enforcement

agency in the jurisdiction in which the purchaser lives. Dealers are required to keep copies for at least six years.

Since 1994, the DOL has been storing these records in their original form, but has not been filing them in a searchable data base.

Summary of Bill: The authority of the DOL to maintain records of applications to purchase pistols and of pistol sales and transfers is removed. Dealers are no longer required to send copies of the records of such transactions to the DOL. Copies must still be sent to local law enforcement agencies and kept by the dealers.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The records maintained by the DOL are unnecessary. The federal government has a 24-hour per day firearms tracking system that covers all firearms, not just pistols. Having the DOL keep the records is a waste of money.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative McMorris, prime sponsor; Joe Waldron, GOAL of Washington (pro); Douglas Lane, citizen (pro); Don Luther, citizen (pro); and Merton Cooper, citizen (pro).