
SENATE BILL 6080

State of Washington

58th Legislature

2003 Regular Session

By Senators McAuliffe, Regala, Stevens, Hargrove, Eide, Carlson, Fairley, Winsley, Franklin, Parlette, Doumit, Keiser, Fraser, B. Sheldon, Rasmussen, Schmidt, T. Sheldon, Morton, Oke, Jacobsen, Mulliken and Spanel

Read first time 04/21/2003. Referred to Committee on Children & Family Services & Corrections.

1 AN ACT Relating to video and computer games depicting violence
2 against public law enforcement officers; amending RCW 7.80.120; adding
3 a new section to chapter 9.91 RCW; creating new sections; prescribing
4 penalties; and providing an expiration date.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that there has been an
7 increase in studies showing a correlation between exposure to violent
8 video and computer games and various forms of hostile and antisocial
9 behavior. The entertainment software industry's ratings and content
10 descriptors of video and computer games reflect that some video and
11 computer games are suitable only for adults due to graphic depictions
12 of sex and/or violence. Furthermore, some video and computer games
13 focus on violence specifically against public law enforcement officers
14 such as police and fire fighters. The legislature encourages retailers
15 and parents to use the rating system.

16 In addition, the legislature finds there is a compelling interest
17 to curb hostile and antisocial behavior in Washington's youth and to
18 foster respect for public law enforcement officers.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 9.91 RCW
2 to read as follows:

3 (1) A person who sells, rents, or permits to be sold or rented, any
4 video or computer game he or she knows to be a violent video or
5 computer game to any minor has committed a class 1 civil infraction as
6 provided in RCW 7.80.120.

7 (2) "Minor" means a person under seventeen years of age.

8 (3) "Person" means a retailer engaged in the business of selling or
9 renting video or computer games and who is subject to the tax on
10 retailers under RCW 82.04.250, including any individual, partnership,
11 corporation, or association.

12 (4) "Violent video or computer game" means a video or computer game
13 that contains realistic or photographic-like depictions of aggressive
14 conflict in which the player kills, injures, or otherwise causes
15 physical harm to a human form in the game who is depicted, by dress or
16 other recognizable symbols, as a public law enforcement officer.

17 (5) Every person shall, in each place of his or her business, post
18 a sign that contains the following message in type that is at least
19 seventy-two points in size:

20 THIS BUSINESS WILL NOT SELL, RENT, OR PROVIDE IN ANY OTHER WAY A
21 VIOLENT VIDEO OR COMPUTER GAME TO ANY PERSON UNDER SEVENTEEN YEARS OF
22 AGE. NO PERSON WHO CANNOT PROVE HE OR SHE IS AT LEAST SEVENTEEN YEARS
23 OF AGE MAY BE SOLD, RENTED, OR PROVIDED A VIOLENT VIDEO OR COMPUTER
24 GAME. RCW 9.91.--- (section 2 of this act).

25 The sign shall be posted at the location where the sale or rental
26 transaction occurs, and in such a way as to be readily visible to any
27 individual who is buying or renting a video or computer game.

28 **Sec. 3.** RCW 7.80.120 and 1997 c 159 s 2 are each amended to read
29 as follows:

30 (1) A person found to have committed a civil infraction shall be
31 assessed a monetary penalty.

32 (a) The maximum penalty and the default amount for a class 1 civil
33 infraction shall be two hundred fifty dollars, not including statutory
34 assessments, except for an infraction of state law involving tobacco
35 products as specified in RCW 70.93.060(4) or an infraction of state law
36 involving violent video or computer games under section 2 of this act,

1 in which case the maximum penalty and default amount is five hundred
2 dollars;

3 (b) The maximum penalty and the default amount for a class 2 civil
4 infraction shall be one hundred twenty-five dollars, not including
5 statutory assessments;

6 (c) The maximum penalty and the default amount for a class 3 civil
7 infraction shall be fifty dollars, not including statutory assessments;
8 and

9 (d) The maximum penalty and the default amount for a class 4 civil
10 infraction shall be twenty-five dollars, not including statutory
11 assessments.

12 (2) The supreme court shall prescribe by rule the conditions under
13 which local courts may exercise discretion in assessing fines for civil
14 infractions.

15 (3) Whenever a monetary penalty is imposed by a court under this
16 chapter it is immediately payable. If the person is unable to pay at
17 that time the court may grant an extension of the period in which the
18 penalty may be paid. If the penalty is not paid on or before the time
19 established for payment, the court may proceed to collect the penalty
20 in the same manner as other civil judgments and may notify the
21 prosecuting authority of the failure to pay.

22 (4) The court may also order a person found to have committed a
23 civil infraction to make restitution.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The office of superintendent of public
25 instruction shall convene a task force to address the findings of the
26 legislature as stated in section 1 of this act and to help meet the
27 goals of the curbing of hostile and antisocial behavior of Washington
28 minors and increased respect for public law enforcement officers.

29 (2) The task force shall consist of: (a) A representative of the
30 office of superintendent of public instruction, who shall chair the
31 task force; (b) two representatives of developers of violent video or
32 computer games; (c) two representatives of businesses who sell or rent
33 violent video or computer games; (d) a representative of a statewide
34 organization whose membership includes parents and teachers; (e) a
35 representative of a student organization with experience in violence
36 awareness and reduction; (f) a representative of the prosecuting
37 attorneys of the state; (g) two members of the public who have

1 experience with issues and research associated with violent video
2 games; and (h) a representative of the department of health. The
3 superintendent shall appoint the members of the task force, except the
4 secretary of health shall appoint the representative from the
5 department.

6 (3) The task force shall consider possible strategies and options
7 designed to reduce access by minors to violent video and computer games
8 that are for sale or rent by any person. The strategies shall include
9 education for developers of the games, parents, persons, law
10 enforcement, and educators. The task force shall review existing
11 efforts by developers and persons to rate violent video and computer
12 games and how those efforts may be improved.

13 (4) The members of the task force shall serve without compensation
14 and the office of superintendent of public instruction shall accomplish
15 its duties under this section within existing resources. The task
16 force and the office of superintendent of public instruction shall not
17 accept funding for task force purposes from groups or persons with a
18 financial interest in the development, production, sale, or rental of
19 violent video or computer games.

20 (5) The task force shall prepare and submit a report and
21 recommendations to the governor and the legislature not later than
22 December 31, 2004.

23 (6) For purposes of this section, the terms "violent video and
24 computer games" and "person" have the same meaning as defined in
25 section 2 of this act.

26 (7) This section expires December 31, 2004.

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