

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1944

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources & Parks, March 21, 2017

Title: An act relating to exempting certain law enforcement officers from the hunter education training program.

Brief Description: Exempting certain law enforcement officers from the hunter education training program.

Sponsors: House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Condotta and Hayes).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/06/17, 98-0.

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 3/14/17, 3/21/17 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Amended Bill

- Exempts certain law enforcement officers from having to complete the firearms skill portion of any online hunter education training program.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Pearson, Chair; Hawkins, Vice Chair; Van De Wege, Ranking Minority Member; Fortunato and McCoy.

Staff: Kelsey Morfitt (786-7407)

Background: The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) manages and protects the state's fish and wildlife resources. Additionally, statute mandates that DFW try to maximize the public recreational game hunting opportunities of all citizens.

To obtain a hunting license, Washington citizens born in 1972 or later must pass a hunter education course that covers hunter safety. DFW offers a traditional, in-person course, which includes classroom instruction, practical exercises, and live firing activities.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

DFW also offers an online course that covers the same content, and the firearms skills test is in the field. If taking the online course, members of the U.S. military are exempt from the firearms skills field test.

A peace officer is any law enforcement personnel subject to the basic law enforcement training requirement in statute or otherwise certified by the Criminal Justice Training Commission. This includes the following:

- general authority officers, such as Washington State Patrol or DFW officers;
- limited authority officers, such as Parks and Recreation officers who have limited enforcement duties;
- specially commissioned officers, such as Oregon or Idaho law enforcement officers; and
- officers meeting specific statutory requirements, such as certified tribal officers.

Summary of Amended Bill: The following current or retired Washington peace officers are exempt from completing the firearms skills test if taking an online hunter education course:

- general authority officers;
- limited authority officers;
- specially commissioned officers who are authorized to carry a concealed pistol; and
- officers in good standing who meet certain statutory requirements.

EFFECT OF NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS COMMITTEE AMENDMENT(S):

- Clarifies that retired peace officers were previously authorized by their employer to carry a concealed weapon.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Substitute House Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: The firearms skills test is not necessary for law enforcement officers. This exemption includes retired peace officers with firearms training. A couple of changes are needed to ensure that peace officers without firearms training are not exempted from the firearms skills test.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Cary Condotta, Prime Sponsor; David Whipple, DFW / Hunter Education Division Manager.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.