

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5856

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Civil Rights & Judiciary

**Title:** An act relating to transfers of firearms to museums and historical societies.

**Brief Description:** Concerning transfers of firearms to museums and historical societies.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senators Wilson, J. and Wilson, L.).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Civil Rights & Judiciary: 2/16/22, 2/23/22 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Exempts the gift, loan, sale, bequest, or transfer of a firearm to a museum or historical society from the background check requirements for a transfer of a firearm where neither party is a licensed dealer.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL RIGHTS & JUDICIARY

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Simmons, Vice Chair; Walsh, Ranking Minority Member; Graham, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Abbarno, Davis, Entenman, Goodman, Kirby, Klippert, Orwall, Peterson, Thai, Valdez and Walen.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Gilday, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ybarra.

**Staff:** Matt Sterling (786-7289).

**Background:**

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

All firearm sales or transfers, in whole or part, in the state are subject to background checks unless specifically exempted by state or federal law. The background check requirement applies to all sales or transfers through a licensed dealer, at gun shows, online, and between unlicensed persons.

Requirements for Sale or Transfer of a Firearm.

Generally, no person may sell or transfer a firearm unless that person is a licensed dealer or the purchaser or transferee is a licensed dealer. However, a sale or transfer of a firearm is permissible when neither party is a licensed dealer if the:

- sale or transfer is processed by a licensed dealer;
- licensed dealer processing the sale or transfer complies with all requirements of federal and state law that would apply if the dealer were selling or transferring the firearm; and
- purchaser or transferee completes, signs, and submits all federal, state, and local forms necessary to process the required background check to the licensed dealer conducting the background check.

However, the requirements for a sale or transfer of a firearm where neither party is a licensed dealer do not apply to:

- a transfer between immediate family members;
- the sale or transfer of an antique firearm;
- a temporary transfer of possession of a firearm necessary to prevent imminent death or great bodily harm to the transferee and the transferee is not prohibited from possessing a firearm under state or federal law;
- the temporary transfer of possession of a firearm if intended to prevent suicide or self-inflicted great bodily harm;
- any law enforcement or corrections agency and, any law enforcement or corrections officer, United States Marshal, member of the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, or federal officials that are acting within the course and scope of the person's employment or official duties;
- a federally licensed gunsmith for the purpose of service or repair, or the return of the firearm to its owner;
- a person who acquired a firearm by operation of law upon the death of the former owner and is in compliance with all federal and state laws; or
- a sale or transfer when the purchaser or transferee is a licensed collector and the firearm being sold or transferred is a curio or relic.

Requirements for Temporary Transfer of a Firearm.

For temporary transfers of a firearm, the requirements for a sale or transfer of a firearm where neither party is a licensed dealer do not apply to transfers:

- between spouses or domestic partners;
- to an established and authorized shooting range where the firearm is kept at all times;
- where the transferee's possession of the firearm is exclusively at a lawful organized competition involving the use of a firearm or while participating in or practicing for a

- performance by an organized group that uses firearms as part of the performance;
- to a person who is under 18 years of age for lawful hunting, sporting, or educational purposes while under the direct supervision and control of a responsible adult who is not prohibited from possessing firearms;
- where the transferee and the firearm remain in the presence of the transferor; or
- while legally hunting and the transferee is not prohibited from possessing firearms under state and federal law and has completed all training and holds all licenses or permits required for such hunting.

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**Summary of Bill:**

The requirements for a sale or transfer of a firearm where neither party is a licensed dealer do not apply to a gift, loan, sale, bequest, or transfer to a museum or historical society.

However, the return of a loaned firearm or firearms to the rightful owner by a museum or historical society, or by museum or historical society personnel while acting in the scope of their official duties, must comply with the requirements for a transfer of a firearm where neither party is a licensed dealer.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) There is a need for a process that ensures the responsible transfer from an owner of historic firearms to a museum for display. This bill solves the problem of making it impossible to transfer firearms to museums. Initiative 594 inadvertently prohibited museums and historic societies from acquiring firearms because it is impossible for nonprofits to have a background check performed on them. This bill supports gun responsibility by allowing the donation of firearms to museums that have thoughtful collection and storage requirements.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Senator Jeff Wilson, prime sponsor; Joseph Govednik, Cowlitz County Historical Museum; Manny Cawaling, Inspire Washington; and Ralph Munro.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.