

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5444

As of January 15, 2024

Title: An act relating to firearm sensitive places.

Brief Description: Concerning firearm sensitive places.

Sponsors: Senators Valdez, Hunt, Kuderer, Nguyen, Pedersen and Saldaña.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 1/15/24.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prohibits individuals from entering certain designated places while knowingly possessing a weapon.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Staff: Joe McKittrick (786-7287)

Background: Weapons Prohibited in Designated Places. It is a gross misdemeanor for any person to enter certain designated places while knowingly possessing a weapon. These places are:

- the restricted access areas of a jail or law enforcement facility;
- courtrooms and other areas adjacent to or used in conjunction with court proceedings;
- the restricted access area of a public health facility;
- taverns and other places designated off-limits to persons under age 21 by Liquor and Cannabis Control Board rules; and
- the restricted access areas of commercial service airports.

These prohibitions do not apply to:

- any person engaged in military activities sponsored by the federal or state governments, while engaged in official duties;

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- security personnel while engaged in official duties;
- correctional personnel or community corrections officers except while in taverns and other places off-limits to persons under age 21 or while in a courthouse as a party to an antiharassment protection order action, a domestic violence protection order action, or a domestic relations action where any party has alleged the existence of domestic violence; or
- law enforcement personnel except while in a courthouse when present as a party to an antiharassment protection order action, a domestic violence protection order action, or a domestic relations action where any party has alleged the existence of domestic violence.

An individual with a valid concealed carry permit continue to carry in the restricted access areas of jails or law enforcement facilities if, upon entering the individual promptly proceeds to the administrator of the facility and obtains written permission to possess the firearm while on the premises.

Weapon means any firearm, explosive, or any weapon usually known as a slungshot, sand club, or metal knuckles; or any knife, dagger, dirk, or other similar weapon capable of causing death or bodily injury and is commonly used with the intent to cause death or bodily injury.

The perimeter of the locations listed above must be posted at reasonable intervals to alert the public to the existence of any law restricting the possession of firearms on the premises.

Gross Misdemeanors. Every person convicted of a gross misdemeanor shall be punished by imprisonment in jail for a maximum term of 364 days, a fine not to exceed \$5,000, or both imprisonment and a fine.

Summary of Bill: The following locations are added to the list of designated places at which it is a gross misdemeanor for any person to enter while knowingly possessing a weapon:

- public libraries;
- zoos or aquariums;
- the premises of a city's, town's, county's, or other municipality's neighborhood, community, or regional park facilities at which children and youth are likely to be present and at which appropriate signage has been posted notifying the public that weapons are not permitted;
- transit stations or transit facilities including all passenger facilities, structures, stops, shelters, bus zones, and other properties owned, leased held, or used by a transit authority for the purpose of providing public transportation services;
- state or local public buildings, where "state or public building" means a building, or part of building, owned, leased, held, or used by the governmental entity of a city, town, county, or other municipality: or by the state of Washington, if state or local public employees are regularly present for the purpose of performing their official

duties and not regularly used, and not intended to be used, by state or local employees as a place of residence.

Cities, towns, counties, or other municipalities must designate the park facilities within its boundaries where children are likely to be present and post appropriate signage at reasonable intervals on the perimeter of the facility's premises to notify the public that weapons are prohibited. Facilities at which children are likely to be present include, but are not limited to facilities that have playgrounds, sports fields, swimming or wading pools, teen or community centers, and skate parks.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 9, 2024.

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

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