

# 2017 LEGISLATIVE SESSION AG REQUEST LEGISLATION ASSAULT WEAPON ENHANCED BACKGROUND CHECKS

Increase community safety by requiring an enhanced background check and license for people seeking to purchase assault weapons and large-capacity magazines.

## PROBLEM

On the night of July 30, in Mukilteo, a deeply troubled 19-year-old shooter opened fire at a party using an assault weapon with a 30-round magazine, killing three young people and seriously wounding another teen. The weapon and the magazine were purchased at Cabela's in Tulalip. The law did not require a waiting period.

- Assault weapons are military weapons, designed to kill people quickly and efficiently using features beyond standard sporting rifles.
- The teenage shooter in this tragic act of terror would **not** have been able to buy a beer or a handgun under state law, but was able to walk out of Cabela's with an assault weapon.
- Current state law includes an effective waiting period for handgun purchases—the time it takes for law enforcement to complete an enhanced background check—but not for purchases of assault weapons.

Today, in Washington, assault weapons are treated the same as hunting rifles – and that means it is easier to buy an assault weapon than it is to purchase a handgun. **If Washington state regulated assault weapons like pistols, this tragic shooting may well have been avoided.**

## BACKGROUND

Assault weapons have been used in a number of high-profile shooting incidents, including the tragic shooting of four teenagers in Mukilteo by a 19 year old who had purchased the gun earlier the week, the 2016 Orlando Pulse nightclub shooting, the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School, the 2012 Aurora, Colorado shooting. Studies show that shootings where assault weapons or large capacity ammunition magazines were used result in 135% more people shot and 57% more killed, compared with other mass shootings.

## LEGISLATION (SB 5444 - HB 1387)

This Enhanced Assault Weapon Background Check policy increases community safety by requiring an enhanced background check and license for people seeking to purchase assault weapons and large-capacity magazines.

This legislation uses checks similar to those currently used for Concealed Pistol Licenses (CPL). Like a CPL, only those over 21 years of age and legally eligible to own a firearm are eligible to purchase an assault weapon. The enhanced background check includes:

- \* In-depth check of local and federal criminal data bases
- \* Checks of local and national mental health commitment records
- \* Requiring the individual to state a clear, lawful reason and use for the assault weapon
- \* Requires a renewed check every year to ensure the person is still eligible to possess the weapon.
- \* Gives local law enforcement up to 30 days to complete the in-depth background check (and issue the assault weapon license.)



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