

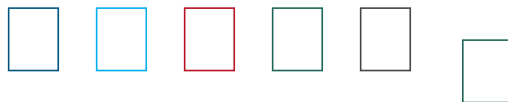
HEALTH + DEVELOPMENT/FAMILY SAFETY

Our Kids, Our Guns: Washington State Legislature Considers **Gun** Control Measures

Common sense **gun** laws are gaining ground in Olympia

BY GEMMA ALEXANDER

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Like many of you, ParentMap has watched with horror as children pick up guns to shoot their classmates or come home in body bags after yet another school shooting. It is tempting, in times like these, to adopt a strident opinion and cling to it. It is easy to demonize guns or deny the role of guns in these violent acts, and to allow emotion to cloud our judgment.

But we believe there is common ground shared by [gun](#) owners and [gun](#) haters. Join us as we explore this common ground throughout 2018, beginning with this look at [gun](#) safety legislation in Olympia. Each month, we'll feature one new article exploring another aspect of [gun](#) safety in our new series, "Our Kids, Our Guns: Finding the Common Ground."

In the [absence of federal leadership](#) on [gun](#) regulations, states are picking up the slack.

Research supports stronger [gun](#) laws, according to Renee Hopkins, CEO of [The Alliance for Gun Responsibility](#). "We know that

states with stronger **gun** laws have less **gun** violence," she says. "We know that developing policies and programs that target keeping firearms out of the most dangerous hands is important."

Successful ballot initiatives in 2014 and 2016 showed that Washington state voters across the political spectrum favor common sense **gun** responsibility laws. As a result, the current legislative session is loaded with **gun** safety bills: several close loopholes in existing laws, some have been around for years, one is truly innovative. One thing they have in common? This year, they all have a chance of becoming law.

1

Safe Storage ([HB 1122](#) / [SB 5463](#))

It's estimated that 800,000 of Washington's 1.8 million **gun** owners don't use locked storage. The

Dangerous Access Prevention Bill creates criminal liability for owners if anyone prohibited from possessing a gun causes harm with an unsafely stored firearm.

According to [King County data](#), unsecured guns are involved in 75 percent of youth suicide attempts and accidental shootings, and 65 percent of school shootings (including the Marysville-Pilchuck shooting that killed five teens). In the 2015-2016 school year, 130 Washington state students were expelled for bringing guns to school.

2

Consistent Background Check Requirements ([HB 1387](#) / [SB 5444](#))

Under current state law, it's easier to buy an assault weapon in Washington

than to buy a handgun. Mass shootings with assault weapons or large capacity ammunition magazines result in 135 percent more people shot and 57 percent more killed. The Enhanced Assault Weapon Background Checks bill would align background check requirements for assault weapons with those for handguns — raising the age of purchase to 21 years, requiring safety training and requiring an annual background check renewal.

3

Restoration of Local Authority ([HB 2666](#) / [SB 6146](#))

Public safety laws — like traffic regulations and building codes — are usually handled at the municipal level. But state-level legislation banned the local regulation of firearms. This bill

would return public safety to local control.

4

Banning the Bumpstock (SB [5992](#) / [SB 6049](#))

Sponsored by NRA-member Senator Van de Wege, Senate Bill 5992 would close a loophole in existing law that allows people to purchase trigger-modification devices that convert legal guns into illegal guns. One of these modification devices was used in the Las Vegas massacre of 58 people; three Washington families affected by that shooting have testified in favor of the bill. Senate Bill 6049 would renew a law banning high-capacity magazines.

5

Keep Crime Guns Off the Street ([HB 1483](#))

Current state law requires the Washington State Patrol (but not other law enforcement agencies) to treat forfeited firearms (aka crime guns) like any other surplus property and resell them at auction. The Washington State Patrol has requested legislation that would grant the agency the option to destroy weapons used in crimes.

6

Suicide Crisis Prevention ([SB 5441](#))

In Washington, 80 percent of firearm deaths are suicides. A myth about suicide is that people who are suicidal will find a way no matter what. In fact, only 10 percent of people who survive a suicide attempt go on to complete a second attempt — but first attempts

with a firearm are almost always fatal.

One study showed that 75 percent of gun-eligible people who completed suicide by firearm had been involuntarily committed for 72 hours. Current law restricts firearm possession from anyone who has been involuntarily committed for 14 days. The Suicide Crisis Prevention bill would help prevent suicide by changing the current law to match the data and restrict firearm possession for six months after an involuntary commitment of 72 hours.

7

Voluntary Waiver ([SB 5553](#))

The Voluntary Waiver of Firearm Rights is the first bill in the U.S. to empower people with a history of mental health crisis to take control of

their own safety planning by preventing themselves from purchasing a firearm during a future crisis. This bill would allow individuals to place themselves on Washington state's prohibited purchaser list through a voluntary, reversible process.

8

Domestic Violence Loophole ([SB 6298](#))

Half of all domestic violence fatalities are shootings, and domestic violence is a common thread that unites mass shooters. This bill would close a loophole in existing domestic violence law prohibiting abusers from possessing firearms by adding domestic violence harassment to the crimes for which a person is prohibited from possession.

Take Action

The Alliance for Gun Responsibility is organizing weekly visits to legislators in Olympia. Sign up to [attend online](#).

Your messages let your representative know they are in line with their constituents and give them leverage when they argue for the bills you support. Find your [representative's contact information](#) online.

Learn More

[Why is there no national funding for gun violence research?](#)

[How do Washington's gun laws compare to other states?](#)

When there is risk of immediate harm – such as

suicide or domestic violence – close relatives can petition for an Extreme Risk Protection Order to temporarily suspend access to firearms from a person in crisis. Learn [how these orders work](#) and [obtain relevant paperwork](#) online.

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ABOUT AUTHOR



BY GEMMA ALEXANDER

Gemma Alexander is a Seattle-based freelance writer with two daughters. When she is not writing for ParentMap, she [blogs about books and travel](#) and spends too much time on Twitter.

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