

I-594--Bad for Business

Nearly every day there is a story in the news about the negligent discharge of a firearm resulting in property or personal damage or death. *Every single* one of these is avoidable with proper training. As a small business owner focusing on crime prevention and personal safety strategies, I also teach women's firearm safety courses. Women are the fastest growing demographic of gun owners in America. In Washington State alone, there are currently over 100,000 women licensed to carry a concealed pistol. Women(and men) should be able to use any legal means necessary to protect themselves against violence, but training needs to be available, as handling a firearm safely is not intuitive knowledge. One must not only know and practice handling a firearm safely, but also take precautions to keep those firearms out of the hands of unauthorized and dangerous individuals. Additionally, it is extremely important to know when we have the legal right to use a firearm in self defense (It's not as cut and dried as many assume).

I am writing to share how the recent passage of Initiative 594 the supposed "background check" law will affect my small training business. The two main points (there are potentially several others) that affect my business are;

(25) "Transfer" means the intended delivery of a firearm to another person without consideration of payment or promise of payment including, but not limited to, gifts and loans.

During the course of firearm safety instruction, a firearm may be transferred between instructor and student many times for the purpose of instruction, demonstration, maintenance, malfunction clearing, repair or for immediate and urgent safety reasons. "Transfer", as defined above, will obviously severely restrict my practices and procedures to the point of such training being nearly impossible. I wonder what this section has to do with a background check?

Furthermore, the wording of the narrow exception in Section 3(4) is rather frustrating;

(ii) if the temporary transfer occurs, and the firearm is kept at all times, at an established shooting range authorized by the governing body of the jurisdiction in which such range is located;

I teach a classroom only foundational firearm safety course in my home, where unloaded firearms are utilized for the purpose of hands-on demonstration and learning. These handguns are either provided by me or my students are encouraged to bring their own. This helps those who are unfamiliar with their firearm to be able to manipulate them in a safe environment. Thus, the "temporary transfer" between instructor and student takes place *not* at an established shooting range. According to I-594, this important safety instruction is now against the law because my home is not compliant with this section. Again, a background check would help here, how?

During the campaign for passage of this onerous and unbelievably misguided bill, the public was told (sold) this was a "background check law", which was at best, emotional manipulation, and at worst, a blatant lie. Background checks are already clearly on the books in Washington State--we simply need to enforce the ones that are already there. However, because this initiative had the backing of billions of dollars by those who scoff at the Constitution and in particular the Second Amendment, the campaign was disastrously effective. I will try to be careful in my implications here, but after a recent comment by Jonathan Gruber regarding the American voter, it does make me shake my head that a few billion dollars, some heart wrenching ads about people dying from 'gun violence' and the unfortunate timing of the shooting in Marysville all seemed to develop into the perfect storm to pass this bill, which, by the way, ultimately has little to do with background checks, and a whole lot to do with controlling what have been, up to now, natural, reasonable and legal interactions of a law abiding populace, whether they be small business owners, firearms instructors, hunters, competitive shooters, or those responsible citizens who own a firearm to protect their loved ones and themselves from violence or death.

Now I am currently in the process of trying to understand this disastrous bill and the undue burden it places on my small business. Many other firearms related businesses, are scrambling to come to terms with the implications of 18 pages of nonsense, figure out how or if we can comply, or make the heavy decision on whether to hang the "Going out of Business" sign. Personally, I have written letters to Senators, Representatives,

my local sheriff, prosecutor, and Chief Criminal Deputy. The few I have heard back from have little to offer themselves in the way of suggestions or recommendations concerning this issue and how I can make it work with my business. It would seem that this law was so hastily thrown together that there was no thought on how to even enforce it! Even our local lawmakers have no idea what compliance to this law will entail. Apparently, the only way to refine this legal monster is for some willing and well funded person (It won't be me!) to stick their neck out to initiate the litigation process, whereby this law will either be wrangled into some sort of legal sense, or be thrown out entirely. My vote goes for the latter.

I'm curious as to how many criminals are feeling the same burden of unknown requirements, the same compelling urge to make a good faith effort to understand how to work within the confines of this onerous legislation, or the same sense of hopelessness as they see the burden this law will add to their "business practices"?

As it now stands, I have no choice but to anxiously await the verdict as to how this law will affect my firearms training business. I will be extremely disappointed if my small business were a casualty of this unnecessary legislation rather than the criminals it purports to target.

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