

Initiative Measure No.

591

concerns firearms.

This measure would prohibit government agencies from confiscating guns or other firearms from citizens without due process, or from requiring background checks on firearm recipients unless a uniform national standard is required.

Should this measure be enacted into law?

Yes

No

The Secretary of State is not responsible for the content of statements or arguments (WAC 434-381-180).



The explanatory statements for initiatives 591 and 594 begin similarly because both describe current firearms law. This is not an error. The effects of the proposed measures are different.

Explanatory Statement

Written by the Office of the Attorney General

The Law as it Presently Exists

Both state and federal laws require that certain sellers of firearms conduct background checks of buyers before selling firearms to determine whether the buyer can legally possess a firearm. Washington law makes it illegal for convicted felons to possess firearms. It also makes it illegal for certain others to possess firearms, including people who: (1) have been convicted of certain misdemeanors; (2) have been issued certain types of restraining orders; (3) have been found not guilty of a crime by reason of insanity; (4) have been found mentally incompetent; or (5) have certain criminal charges pending. It is a felony to deliver any firearm to any person reasonably believed to be prohibited from owning or possessing a firearm.

State laws governing background checks vary from state to state. In Washington, a background check is only required to buy a pistol, and only if the seller is a firearms dealer. Washington law also provides an

exception to the background check requirement for certain sales of pistols from dealers. If the buyer has already been issued a concealed pistol license, then no further background check is required. Also, a firearms dealer can complete a sale if the sheriff or police chief fails to provide the results of a background check within five business days. That five day period can be extended if the buyer does not have a valid permanent Washington driver's license or identification card, or has lived in Washington for less than ninety days.

Washington law allows Washington residents to buy rifles and shotguns in other states. And it allows residents of other states to buy rifles and shotguns in Washington. In both cases, the sale must comply with federal law. The sale must also be legal under the laws of both Washington and the other state.

Federal law also requires background checks on potential buyers of firearms. This federal requirement applies only when the seller is a firearms dealer. Unlike Washington law, the federal requirement applies to all types of firearms, not just pistols. Federal law does not require a background check if the buyer holds a concealed pistol license. Also, federal law allows a firearms dealer to complete a sale if the results of a background check are not returned within three business days.

The federal and state constitutions prohibit governments from confiscating private property, including firearms, without providing due process of law. In general, due process requires a lawful basis for taking the property, notice of the government's action, and an opportunity to explain why property should not be forfeited. Court proceedings are examples of ways in which due process is provided. Washington law authorizes the forfeiture of firearms in a number of situations. Washington courts may order forfeiture of firearms found in the possession of people who cannot legally possess firearms or who have criminal proceedings pending. Courts may also order forfeiture of firearms that have been found concealed on a person who does not have a permit to carry a concealed pistol. Firearms used in the commission of certain crimes may also be forfeited. And firearms can be forfeited if found in the possession of a person arrested for a felony in which the firearm was used or displayed.

The Effect of the Proposed Measure, if Approved

This measure would prohibit government agencies from requiring background checks on the recipient of a firearm unless a uniform national standard is required.

This measure would also state that government agencies may not confiscate firearms from citizens without due process.

Fiscal Impact Statement

Written by the Office of Financial Management
For more information visit www.ofm.wa.gov/ballot

Initiative 591 would have no direct impact on state and local revenues, costs, expenditures or indebtedness.

General Assumptions

- The federal and state constitutions prohibit governments from confiscating private property, including firearms, without due process of law. Therefore, it is currently unlawful for any government agency to confiscate guns or other firearms from citizens without due process.
- The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act of 1993 (Brady Act), Public Law 103-159, is a required uniform national standard for a background check on the recipient of a firearm.
- Current state law regarding a background check on the recipient of a firearm would remain in effect.
- The effective date of the initiative is December 4, 2014.

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Results are announced after 8 p.m. on Election Day and are updated frequently.

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Argument For Initiative Measure 591

Protect your rights, vote yes on 591

Initiative 591 protects against *illegal* search and seizure, preventing politicians and bureaucrats driven by an anti-rights agenda from depriving citizens of their property without due process.

The gun prohibition lobby responsible for draconian anti-civil rights and self-defense laws in New York, Washington, D.C. and Chicago, is now targeting Washington citizens, using money and resources from out of state.

No gun confiscation without due process

We saw firearms confiscated without due process in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Some people never got their property back. We are seeing confiscation of firearms in Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and California.

This affects you if you own a gun, or not

In Washington State, we have already seen legislation proposed to allow police to enter *your home* and search *your bedroom* for lawfully owned firearms without a warrant or court order. Government agencies are collecting record amounts of *your personal data*, raising grave privacy concerns.

591 does not prevent background checks

591 protects background check uniformity and prevents unwarranted intrusion by the state into temporary firearm loans to friends or in-laws. It stops the state from creating a universal gun registry that could enable future confiscation. Maintaining balance between privacy rights and public safety is what 591 is about. It is supported by a diverse bipartisan coalition of law enforcement professionals, collectors, competitors, and sportsmen and women who believe that nobody's privacy should be for sale to the gun prohibition lobby.

Rebuttal of Argument Against

The most telling thing is *what opponents don't rebut*. They ignore the fact that 591 stops firearms confiscation without due process of law. Why? Because due process led to a unanimous court reversal of *the Seattle gun ban they supported!* Instead, *they falsely claim* that 591 weakens current background checks. *But they can't cite an example because there isn't one.* We need a strong uniform national standard background check law *because criminals cross state lines.*

Argument Prepared by

Alan Gottlieb, Chair, Protect Our Gun Rights Coalition; **Bill Burris**, Spokesman, Washington State Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors Association; **Brian Blake**, State Representative, Democrat, six term veteran legislator; **John Rodabaugh**, President, Washington Arms Collectors; **Julianne Versnel**, Publisher, Second Amendment Foundation's Woman & Guns Magazine; **Phil Shave**, Retired Chief, Law Enforcement State Parks

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Argument Against Initiative Measure 591

Initiative 591 will make it easier for guns to fall into the wrong hands by weakening our criminal background check system on gun sales.

No on 591: We Need Stronger, Not Weaker, Criminal Background Checks on Gun Sales

591 would roll back Washington's existing - and already inadequate - background check laws to conform to weak federal standards. 591 is a dangerous step backward. It locks in loopholes that allow criminals, domestic abusers and other dangerous individuals to buy guns without a criminal background check. Washington voters have a choice this election: close loopholes that allow criminals and people with severe mental illnesses to buy guns without criminal background checks, or roll back standards.

No on 591: Trust Washington Voters, Not Congress

591 ties the hands of Washington voters and locks us into a federal standard. Washington voters should not hand over our ability to protect our lives and property to a Congress who has failed to act.

No on 591: Protect Safety, Not Criminals

No one wants to see criminals and other dangerous people continue to have easy access to firearms. Criminal background checks work. Since its inception, the background check system has blocked 2.2 million gun sales to prohibited people. We should be strengthening the system, but 591 does the opposite. It makes it easier for dangerous individuals to get guns.

This is why a broad coalition of law enforcement, gun violence survivors, domestic violence survivors and faith leaders encourage you to vote *No on Initiative 591*.

Rebuttal of Argument For

Current federal background check laws are weaker than Washington state standards. 591 would roll back our laws and tie the hands of voters - and law enforcement - giving criminals easy access to guns. Background checks work. States that have weakened background checks standards have seen an increase in murder rates and gun violence overall. Let's close loopholes and make it harder for criminals to access guns. Vote No on 591.

Argument Prepared by

Cheryl Stumbo, Jewish Federation Shooting Survivor; **Jolaine Marr**, Domestic Violence Survivor; **Faith Ireland**, retired State Supreme Court Justice; **Robert Brauer**, Lifetime Member of NRA, Gun Owner; **Kim Abel**, President, League of Women Voters of Washington; **Becky Roe**, former prosecutor, past Washington Association of Justice President

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Complete Text Initiative Measure 591

AN ACT Relating to protecting gun and other firearm rights; adding new sections to chapter 9.41 RCW; and creating new sections.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. A new section is added to chapter 9.41 RCW to read as follows:

It is unlawful for any government agency to confiscate guns or other firearms from citizens without due process.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. A new section is added to chapter 9.41 RCW to read as follows:

It is unlawful for any government agency to require background checks on the recipient of a firearm unless a uniform national standard is required.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. The provisions of this act are to be liberally construed to effectuate the intent, policies, and purposes of this act.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 5. This act is known and may be cited as the "Protect Our Gun Rights Act."

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Complete Text Initiative Measure 594

AN ACT Relating to requiring criminal and public safety background checks for gun sales and transfers; amending RCW 9.41.010, 9.41.090, 9.41.122, 9.41.124, and 82.12.040; adding new sections to chapter 9.41 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 82.08 RCW; creating a new section; and prescribing penalties.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. There is broad consensus that felons, persons convicted of domestic violence crimes, and persons dangerously mentally ill as determined by a court should not be eligible to possess guns for public safety reasons. Criminal and public safety background checks are an effective and easy mechanism to ensure that guns are not purchased by or transferred to those who are prohibited from possessing them. Criminal and public safety background checks also reduce illegal gun trafficking. Because Washington's current background check requirements apply only to sales or transfers by licensed firearms dealers, many guns are sold or transferred without a criminal and public safety background check, allowing criminals and dangerously mentally ill individuals to gain access to guns.

Conducting criminal and public safety background checks will help ensure that all persons buying guns are legally eligible to do so. The people find that it is in the public interest to strengthen our background check system by extending the requirement for a background check to apply to all gun sales and transfers in the state, except as permitted herein. To encourage compliance with background check requirements, the sales tax imposed by RCW 82.08.020 would not apply to the sale or transfer of any firearms between two unlicensed persons if the unlicensed persons have complied with all background check requirements.

This measure would extend criminal and public safety background checks to all gun sales or transfers. Background checks would not be required for gifts between immediate family members or for antiques.

Sec. 2. RCW 9.41.010 and 2013 c 183 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "Antique firearm" means a firearm or replica of a firearm not designed or redesigned for using rim fire or conventional center fire ignition with fixed ammunition and manufactured in or before 1898, including any matchlock, flintlock, percussion cap, or similar type of ignition system and also any firearm using fixed ammunition manufactured in or before 1898, for which ammunition is no longer manufactured in the United States and is not readily available in the ordinary channels of commercial trade.

(2) "Barrel length" means the distance from the bolt face of a closed action down the length of the axis of the bore to the crown of the muzzle, or in the case of a barrel with attachments to the end of any legal device permanently attached to the end of the muzzle.

(3) "Crime of violence" means:

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