



WSLEFIA

WASHINGTON STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT FIREARMS INSTRUCTORS ASSOCIATION



WHERE THE TRAINERS GO TO TRAIN

WSLEFIA represents the law enforcement firearms professionals who train our officers and has in its membership the most knowledgeable and well-trained firearms experts in our State. As a training organization, WSLEFIA seldom chooses sides in political issues, but the firearms and civil rights issues raised require a response. WSLEFIA has reviewed both initiatives 591 and 594 in detail and considered the impact of each on both law enforcement officers and the public.

A unanimous vote of the WSLEFIA membership at a general membership meeting resulted in the following positions on the two initiatives:

Initiative 591

WSLEFIA endorses this initiative which preserves existing constitutional and legal protections for citizen firearm ownership. Furthermore, 591 provides for background check uniformity and compliance with current and future Federal firearm background check laws, while allowing Washington laws to change if, or when, Federal standards change. 591 does not reverse any existing background check laws.

Initiative 594

WSLEFIA opposes initiative 594 because it is poorly written, does not comply with the Federal laws governing Federal Firearms Licensees, places an unwarranted, unreasonable and unenforceable burden upon only law abiding citizens, will result in the inadvertent criminalization of both citizens and law enforcement officers. Furthermore 594 will:

- Not improve public safety because it fails to address criminal possession and use of firearms, or the access to firearms by the mentally ill,
- Engender disrespect for the law by re-defining ordinary, safe recreational and shooting behaviors as crimes; the predictable result will be massive non-compliance,
- Divert scarce law enforcement resources to the tracking, policing, prosecution and incarceration of ordinary good citizens who merely engage in the sharing, trading or private sale of firearms,
- Damage existing firearm safety and hunting safety training programs by preventing the temporary transfer of firearms among trainers and students,
- Create an atmosphere of distrust between law enforcement and citizens which may result in the exclusion of law enforcement firearms training from private firing ranges; most departments rely on access to local private ranges as training venues as only a few large departments have their own training facilities,
- Create criminal penalties, up to Class C felonies, for recreational sharing of firearms, temporary loan of firearms and many other ordinary non-criminal activities,
- Damage the law enforcement profession by criminalizing many firearm transfers between officers with the result that good officers will be dismissed for "felony" acts and others will lose their ability to testify against real criminals because they themselves have committed 594 felonies,
- Register all firearms which are temporarily transferred, not just those sold, thus creating a vast firearm registry in the State Department of Licensing which largely duplicates existing federally required record keeping. This registry must accommodate millions of temporary transfers each year at huge expense to the State in computer systems, employees and facilities; the multi-million dollar cost of this registry will be borne by the taxpayers with no public safety benefit.