

GOAL Post

2010-1

Legislative Update from Olympia

8 January 2010

LEGISLATIVE SESSION TO CONVENE MONDAY, 11 JANUARY

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

CUT-OFF CALENDAR

HOLDOVERS FROM 2009 -- PREFILED BILLS

FIRST (PRO)GUN BILL SCHEDULED FOR A HEARING

2010 PROGNOSIS

The state legislature convenes Monday, 11 January, for a 60-day "short" session (a longer, 105-day session is held during odd-numbered years). Much of the attention this year will be focused on budgetary issues and fixes or patches for the economy. Rest assured, however, time will be set aside to take a look at firearms and laws regulating their use!

Once convened, the legislature does not take holidays off (MLK Day in January, President's Day in February), although they do take most weekends off to visit the home district and receive input from constituents.

Before each session starts, there is typically a reshuffle of offices as assignments are changed, replacements are seated, etc. Telephone numbers remain the same, by district, so if your Senator or one of your Representatives has changed, the office telephone will be the same. Your elected legislators and their contact information is available by inserting your residence zip code at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/Default.aspx>

Combined House and Senate e-mail addresses are available at <https://dlr.leg.wa.gov/MemberEmail/Default.aspx>

Several thousand bills are filed in a typical two-year legislative biennium (in this case, 2009-2010). Bills that were filed but not acted on last year may still be considered this year. In addition, new bills are being filed daily. Only a small percentage of bills filed actually make it to the Governor's desk for her signature or veto.

Getting a bill all the way to the governor is generally a five or six step process. It must first be heard by the appropriate policy committee (for firearms, usually the House or Senate Judiciary Committees). If it passes out of the policy committee, it goes to the Rules Committee where it awaits a floor vote by the entire chamber (House or Senate). If it passes out of the original chamber, it then goes across the capitol building to the other chamber, where it goes through the committee and floor vote process again. (Bills that have a fiscal impact must also be passed by the fiscal committee in each chamber.)

If a bill is modified in the second chamber (House bill in the Senate or Senate bill in the House), it must receive a concurrence vote by the original chamber or go to a conference committee for reconciliation, then back for an concurrence vote by both chambers. Once all those hurdles are passed, it's on its way to the governor. Now you can see why only a fraction of bills make it all the way through the process.

A graphic depiction of the process is available at http://www.leg.wa.gov/StudentsPage/Pages/bill2Law_elementary.aspx

One of the first items of business in each legislative session is adoption of a cut-off calendar. The cut-off calendar establishes the dates by which a bill must clear steps in the process. In most cases (not always) if a bill does not pass it's cut-off date, it is considered dead for the session. Exceptions are made occasionally, so the only real cut-off date is when the legislature adjourns, this year at midnight on Thursday, on March 11.

I'll post the cut-off dates in the next GOAL Post.

A few bills of interest from the last session remain and may or may not be acted on. HB 1604 would allow use of lawfully registered suppressors (current law allows lawful possession, but prohibits their use). HB 2226 improves the process that allows retired peace officers to carry firearms nationwide (scheduled for a public hearing Monday, 11 January; see information below). HB 2264 requires all firearm transfers at gun shows be conducted (and papered) by a licensed dealer (FFL).

HB 2477, by Rep. Brendan Williams (D-22) would impose strict liability standards against anyone who sells or transfers a firearm at a gun show to a person who could not have passed a NICS check. (It's already a criminal offense to KNOWINGLY transfer a firearm to a prohibited person. The Williams bill does NOT include "knowingly.")

HB 2499, by Rep. Barbara Bailey (R-10) pre-filed a bill that relaxes the limit on possession of black powder used in muzzle-loading firearms. The bill increases the current limit of five pounds to 50 pounds.

Senator Adam Kline (D-37) and Rep. Ross Hunter (D-48) held a press conference last month where they said they would introduce a bill banning possession of so-called "assault weapons." Kline said the bill will be similar to the 1994 Clinton gun ban, which wasn't really a ban at all. He declined to share a copy of his draft with me. I expect the bill will go far beyond the Clinton ban, just as his so-called a/w bill from 2005 did: it bans all future possession, with a limited grandfathering provision for those already in possession, IF you register them with the local sheriff, pass a background check and pay a registration fee -- annually.

2010 is an election year. That will have an impact on what bills pass and those that die. According to an article in the Seattle Weekly published shortly after the Kline/Hunter press conference, both Speaker of the House Frank Chopp and House Majority Leader Lynn Kessler expressed doubts about such a bill getting through their chamber. With a large number of rural Democrats taking our side of the gun issue, passing anti-gun bills is no sure thing, even in a legislature that's 2/3 controlled by Democrats. If your legislators are rural democrats, be sure to contact them and give them your views on the various bills. (Actually, you should all give your legislators your position on bills; whether they choose to follow it or not is something for subsequent discussion in November!)

BILL STATUS / GOAL POSITION ON BILLS:

Bill #	Subject	Sponsor	Status
HB 1604	Firearm suppressors	Condotta (R-12)	H. Jud.
HB 2226	Retired peace officer qualification	Orcutt (R-18)	H. Jud
HB 2264	Gun show regulation	Williams (D-22)	H. Jud.
HB 2477	Gun sale liability	Williams (D-22)	Unassigned
HB 2499	Black powder storage/transport	Bailey (R-10)	Unassigned

Key to abbreviations: HB = House Bill, SB = Senate Bill, H. Jud = House Judiciary,

GOAL POSITION ON BILLS:

HB 1604	SUPPORT
HB 2226	SUPPORT
HB 2264	OPPOSE
HB 2477	OPPOSE
HB 2499	SUPPORT

PUBLIC HEARINGS SCHEDULED:

Monday, 11 January 1:30 p.m. HB 2226
House Judiciary House Hearing Room "A" Obrien House Office Bldg

LEGISLATIVE HOT LINE: You may reach your Representatives and Senator by calling the Legislative Hotline at 1-800-562-6000. Toll free!!! The hearing impaired may obtain TDD access at 1-800-635-9993. Also toll free!!!

1-800-562-6000 TDD 1-800-635-9993

OTHER DATA: Copies of pending legislation (bills), legislative schedules and other information are available on the legislature's web site at "www.leg.wa.gov". Bills are available in Acrobat (.pdf) format. You may download a free version of Adobe Acrobat Reader from Adobe's web site (<http://www.adobe.com>). You may also obtain hard copy bills, initiatives, etc. in the mail from the Legislative Bill Room FREE OF CHARGE by calling 1-360-786-7573. Copies of bills may also be ordered toll free by calling the Legislative Hotline at (800) 562-6000. You may also hear floor and committee hearing action live at <http://www.tvw.org/> (you need "RealAudio" to do this, available free at the TVW web site).

By reading the House and Senate "bill reports" (hbr, sbr) for each bill, you can see how individual committee members voted. By reading the "roll call" for each bill, you can see how the entire House or Senate voted on any bill. The beauty of the web site is that ALL this information is available, on line, to any citizen.

GET THE WORD OUT: If you want to subscribe to the GOAL Post by e-mail, send a message to "jwaldron@halcyon.com". Please pass GOAL Post on to anyone you believe may have an interest in protecting our rights. Better yet, make a couple of copies of this message, post it on your gun club's bulletin board, and leave copies with your local gun shop(s). PERMISSION IS HEREBY GRANTED TO DUPLICATE OR REDISTRIBUTE GOAL POST PROVIDED IT IS REPRODUCED IN ITS ENTIRETY WITHOUT TEXTUAL MODIFICATION AND CREDIT IS GIVEN TO GOAL. I can be reached at "jwaldron@halcyon.com." Unfortunately, I am unable to mail hard copy GOAL Post to individuals. Limited numbers of hard copies MAY be available at the Second Amendment Foundation book table at WAC gun shows.

NOTICE: If you believe you have received the GOAL Post in error, first check the "From" line in the address to determine if you received it directly or as part of a list. GP has both individual subscribers and list subscribers. If you do not wish to receive direct distribution of GOAL Posts, please send an e-mail to jwaldron@halcyon.com with "Remove GOAL Post" in the subject line. Please include in the body the address that sent you GP. If you received it as a list member (e.g. WA-CCW, WA-GUNS, etc), you must ask the list owner to be removed. I will respond directly to individual subscribers.

Upcoming WAC gun show(s):

Monroe	16-17 January
Monroe	13-14 February
Puyallup	20-21 February

"The right of the individual citizen to bear arms in defense of himself, or the state, shall not be impaired, but nothing in this section shall be construed as authorizing individuals or corporations to organize, maintain or employ an armed body of men."

Article 1, Section 24
Constitution of the State of Washington

Copyright 2010 Gun Owners Action League of WA