

Washington bans anyone under 21 from buying assault rifles

■ State joins others that have raised the legal age of assault rifle purchase

By Martha Bellisle
The Associated Press

SEATTLE — Washington on Tuesday joined a handful of other states that ban anyone younger than from buying a semi-automatic assault rifle after voters passed a sweeping firearms measure in November that has drawn a court challenge from gun-rights advocates.

The ballot initiative seeks to curb gun violence by toughening background checks for people buying assault rifles, increasing the age limit to buy those firearms and requiring the safe storage of all guns. Only the age-limit portion of the measure went into effect on Jan. 1; the rest becomes law on July 1.

Kristen Ellingboe, a spokeswoman for the Washington Alliance for Gun Responsibility, said the initiative was one of the most comprehensive gun-violence prevention measures to pass in the

United States. It specifically targeted “semi-automatic assault rifles” in response to mass shootings across the country, she said.

“We’ve seen that assault rifles are the weapon of choice for mass shootings, and when they’re used, more people are killed and injured,” Ellingboe said.

Fifty-nine percent of Washington voters approved Initiative 1639 in the Nov. 6 general election.

“We’ve seen time and again that Washington voters want action to prevent gun violence in our state,” Ellingboe said. “They showed that again by supporting 1639 by a wide margin.”

Opponents have sued to block it.

“Starting today, young adults between the ages of 18 to 20 will have their rights to purchase semi-automatic rifles stripped away,” said Dave Workman, a spokesman for the Bellevue, Washington-based Second Amendment Foundation, on Jan. 1.

The federal lawsuit said the measure violates the Second and 14th amendments of the Constitution as well as gun sellers’ rights under the Commerce Clause. Plaintiffs in the lawsuit are firearms dealers

in Spokane and Vancouver, a 19-year-old competitive shooter, a 19-year-old in the Army Reserves, a 20-year-old recreational shooter, the Second Amendment Foundation and the National Rifle Association.

Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson said he “looks forward to representing the people of the state of Washington in court against the NRA.”

“The gun lobby is trying to thwart the will of nearly 60 percent of Washingtonian voters who supported common sense gun reform in our state,” he said in an email.

The full measure, when it goes into effect later this year, will expand the background check process to ensure that vetting for rifle purchases is the same as for buying pistols.

Now, people in Washington who buy long guns are run through the FBI’s National Instant Criminal Background Check System, or NICS. Background checks for handgun sales are done by local law enforcement agencies that can access NICS as well as more detailed records that might expose mental health issues or harder-to-find criminal records. And

you must be 21 to purchase a pistol.

“This will update Washington state law so the requirements to purchase semi-automatic assault rifle will match handguns,” Ellingboe said.

In most states, including over the border in Idaho and Oregon, you must be 18 to buy an assault rifle. But Republican-dominant Florida passed a law after a school shooting to increase the age limit to 21.

Nikolas Cruz was 18 when he legally bought the assault rifle he used to kill 17 people at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, last February.

Four other states — Hawaii, Illinois, Vermont and New York — also prohibit anyone under 21 from buying all firearms.

Workman of Second Amendment Foundation says Washington’s measure will take away firearms from law-abiding residents who can easily pass multiple background checks. It will impair public safety and embolden criminals while placing restrictions on people who already legally own semi-automatic rifles, Workman said.

REGION IN BRIEF

From wire reports

Hanford contract awarded to Kennewick company

RICHLAND, Wash. — The Department of Energy has awarded a Hanford contract valued at up to \$152 million to a Kennewick company.

The Tri-City Herald reports HPM Corp., which is currently the occupational medical contractor for the Hanford nuclear reservation, has won the new Hanford Occupational Medical Services Contract.

It is the first of five major contracts the Department of Energy plans to award over the next two years to replace expiring contracts.

Under the seven-year contract, HPM Corp. will provide services to up to 9,000 workers.

Services range from basic first aid to exams to evaluate employees’ injuries and illnesses to set possible work restrictions.

HPM’s current Hanford contract for six years, plus extensions totaling five months, is valued at almost \$107 million.

Chief Executive Scott Brodeur says some of the increased expense of the new contract will cover expanded clinic hours for

Hanford workers.

Mom faces \$900K lawsuit

PORTLAND — An Albany woman who is criminally accused of doping her 5-month-old baby with methadone reportedly to get him to sleep now faces a \$900,000 lawsuit.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports the lawsuit, filed Friday by a lawyer representing the interests of her son, also attempts to stop Magan McDermott from collecting a \$130,000 pending payment from the state for the death of her 15-year-old daughter.

McDermott lost custody of her daughter in 2015, and her daughter died from gastrointestinal problems in 2016 under the watch of the Oregon Department of Human Services. The lawsuit states that the \$130,000 is the only asset that 34-year-old McDermott has.

McDermott has been in Benton County Jail since November, and her criminal attorney couldn’t be reached for comment on her behalf.

She has pleaded not guilty to charges including delivery of methadone to a minor.



Contributed photo

A seminar will take place in Halfway to help ranchers protect their livestock against wolves.

LIVESTOCK

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tax-exempt status, which could provide needed guidance and receive donations on behalf of the project. UCP has experience in that area, and the project is in keeping with our mission to assist citizen-led initiatives that benefit Pine Valley and the greater panhandle.

Shella believes this is a chance for ranchers to become proactive rather than reactive.

“As Hilary Anderson says, ‘We do not own what we do not create.’ To that end, we are bringing Hilary and Andrew to Halfway so that we can learn from their experiences,” Shella said. “Not everything the Andersons share will work in every situation, but certain tools and techniques may make a big difference in some situations.”

The Andersons will share their knowledge about the costs and benefits of each non-lethal or husbandry method when dealing with wolves. Business profitability and sustainability is a theme that may be most appreciated by livestock managers, owners and those who ride for them.

The Andersons’ two-day seminar, “Strategies for Ranching on a Landscape with Wolves,” will be held Jan. 10-11 at the Halfway Lions Club, 235 Lion St. Cost is \$50, which includes the two-day seminar, two lunches and Thursday dinner. Registration is required by Jan. 5 and may be completed at www.unitedcommunitypartners.org/strategic-ranching or by contacting Shella DelCurto at mightyadashin@gmail.com or 541-519-5563.

Special lodging rates are offered by Pine Valley Lodge for reservations made by Jan. 5. Call 541-742-2027 or go to www.pvlodge.com and mention the Strategic Ranching workshop to get these rates.

For information on scholarships and assistance to cover lodging costs, contact Roblyn Brown at roblyn.brown@state.or.us or 541-962-1850.

Donations to support this event will be accepted. Make checks payable to UCP and note “Strategic Ranching Workshop” in the memo line. Mail to: United Community Partners, P.O. Box 545, Halfway 97834. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

LICENSE

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the card front shows a hologram of Oregon symbols at certain angles and light conditions.

DMV began testing and install the new card system in two Salem-area field offices the week of Dec. 17.

After making sure the new process is working properly, DMV will begin to install it in the rest of its 60 field offices during

the first half of 2019.

Real ID option in 2020

As a reminder, this new card design is not yet available as a Real ID Act-compliant card.

Oregon will begin to offer an optional Real ID-compliant card in July 2020.

Until that time, Oregon driver licenses and ID cards will continue to be accepted as identification at secure federal locations and for boarding com-

mercial aircraft. For more information about Oregon and Real ID, visit http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/DMV/Pages/Real_ID.aspx.

More information

Any time you need to visit a DMV office, first check www.OregonDMV.com to find office hours and locations, and to make sure you have everything you need before your visit. You also can do some DMV business from home at OregonDMV.com. You can

For a preview of the new card design, watch a brief video on the ODOT channel here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pzCIU2yrAr0&feature=youtu.be>

renew your vehicle registration, file a change of address or file notice of the sale of your vehicle online without getting in line at an office.

JUDGE

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shadowing Presiding Judge Thomas Powers.

“I’ve had the chance to watch (Powers and the courthouse staff) work in court,” Wes said. “Judge Powers has shown me his daily routine and how the courthouse runs.”

Wes also sat down with outgoing judge Mona Williams and went over her current docket, including the cases Wes will preside over. Wes said he admired Mona and her campaign.

“I want to congratulate Mona,” Wes said. “She fought a good, hard, vigorous campaign.”

The Union County Courthouse staff also gave Wes

a two-inch-thick, approximately 500-page binder called the “Judge’s Bench Book.” Wes likened it to an encyclopedia for judges.

“It has information on everything you possibly need to know as a judge,” Wes said, noting the binder contains guidance on all the different types of trials.

He said in recent weeks he has been studying up on family and juvenile law, which are the first types of cases he will be presiding over.

Wes complimented the courthouse staff for their help in acclimating him and for their work ethic.

“They operate in the courtroom in a way that is so professional, it has a

“ (Courtroom staff) operate in a way that is so professional, it has a calming effect on all of the litigants. How hard they work is very heartening. That’ll make being a judge easier.”

— Wes Williams, incoming Union and Wallowa counties circuit court judge

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Wes said he does feel added pressure to make correct decisions as a judge.

“If I make the wrong decision, it can cause havoc in someone’s life,” Wes said.

During the campaign, Wes repeatedly brought up the importance of

establishing a courtroom culture in which everyone feels like they receive a fair trial. In an interview Tuesday, Wes had not changed his tune.

“I’ve said all along, I want all people to feel welcome in the courtroom to say their piece regardless of their gender, their race or their ethnicity,” he said.

Wes will be sworn in on Jan. 7 at the Union County Courthouse in a public ceremony.

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