# Some Washington Sheriffs Refuse to Enforce New Gun Laws

Statewide initiative approved last fall raised the minimum age for semi-automatic rifles, required safety course and expanded background check and storage requirements

By Nicholas K. Geranios **Associated Press** 

SPOKANE, Wash. -Sheriffs in a dozen Washington counties say they won't enforce the state's sweeping new restrictions on semi-automatic rifles until the courts decide whether they are constitutional.

A statewide initiative approved by voters in November raised the minimum age for buying semi-automatic rifles from 18 to 21, required buyers to first pass a firearms safety course and added expanded background checks and gun storage requirements, among other things. It was among the most comprehensive of a string of state-level gun-control measures enacted in the U.S. after last year's Douglas, Benton, Pashooting at a Florida

high school.

The National Rifle Association and the Second Amendment Foundation have filed a lawsuit in federal court alleging the initiative is unconstitutional. They say its purchasing requirements violate the right to bear arms and stray into the regulation of interstate commerce, which is the province of the federal government.

Wahkiakum, Mason and Klickitat - along with the police chief of the small town of Republic, have said they will not enforce the new law until the issues are decided by the courts.

"I swore an oath to defend our citizens and constitutionally their protected rights," Grant County Sheriff Jones said. "I do not believe the popular vote

I swore an oath to defend our citizens and their constitutionally protected rights. I do not believe the popular vote overrules that

Sheriffs in 12 mostly rural, conservative counties — Grant, Lincoln, Okanogan, Cowlitz, cific, Stevens, Yakima,

overrules that."

Initiative supporters say they are disappointed but noted the sheriffs have no role in enforcing the new restrictions



In this photo taken Oct. 2, 2018, semi-automatic rifles fill a wall at a gun shop in Lynnwood, Wash. A dozen county sheriffs in Washington state are refusing to enforce restrictions on semi-automatic rifles that voters approved in November. They say the new law might be unconstitutional, and they're waiting for the courts to weigh in.

until July 1, when the expanded background checks take effect. The provision brings vetting for semi-automatic rifle

and other gun purchases in line with the process for buying pistols.

"The political grandstanding is disheartening," said Renee Hopkins, chief executive of the Alliance for Gun Responsibility, which pushed the initiative. "If they do not (run the background checks), we will have a huge problem."

Initiative 1639 was passed by about 60 percent of Washington voters nine months after a gunman opened fire at Florida's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

The Parkland shooting, which left 17 dead, fueled a shift in the country's political landscape regarding gun control. Other state-level measures included requiring waiting periods and banning high-capacity magazines. Nine states have approved laws that allow the temporary confiscation of weapons from people deemed a safety risk, bringing the total to 14 nationwide. Several more are likely to follow in the coming months.

At the federal level, for the first time in modern history, gun-control groups outspent the NRA on the 2018 midterm

elections. President Donald Trump directed the Justice Department to issue regulations to ban so-called bump stocks. And the new Democratic majority in the House last week held its first hearing on gun control in a decade.

"For far too long, Republicans in Congress have offered moments of silence instead of action in the wake of gun tragedies. That era is over," Democratic Rep. Jerrold Nadler of New York said as he convened the House Judiciary Committee hearing on Wednesday.

Washington's initiative targeted semi-automatic assault rifles like the AR-15 used in the Florida shooting and other recent high-profile attacks. Such rifles fire only once for each pull of the trigger but automatically eject and rechamber a new round after each shot.

Grant County's sheriff said many residents in his part of the state, known for its vast potato farms, are strong supporters of gun rights. They "have a right to have this challenge and

See GUNS on page 11

## Need health insurance?

CareOregon's goMobile Team can help you sign up for Oregon Health Plan (OHP).



**SNAP** assistance available at ALL locations

CLACKAMAS COUNTY MULINO CHILDHOOD **DEVELOPMENT COALITION** 

13700 S Freeman Rd, Mulino Feb 19...... 9:15-11:15 a.m. SALVATION ARMY

**NORTH CLACKAMAS** 8495 SE Monterey Happy Valley

## MULTNOMAH COUNTY

**CAREOREGON** 315 SW 5th Ave, Portland Feb 6 ...... 9-11 a.m. Feb 13 ..... 9-11 a.m. Feb 20 ..... 9-11 a.m. Feb 27 ..... 9-11 a.m.

**SERVICE CENTER** 

8800 SE 80th Ave, Portland Feb 12 ..... 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

**DEPARTMENT OF** 

50 SW 2nd Ave, Portland

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN** 

Portland

**DEPARTMENT OF** 

**CLACKAMAS** 

**HUMAN SERVICES** 

Feb 5 ..... 9-11 a.m. Feb 12 ..... 9-11 a.m. Feb 19 ...... 9-11 a.m. Feb 26 ...... 9-11 a.m.

**SERVICES ALBERTA** 30 N Webster St Ste A,

Feb 15...11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Feb 5 ......1-3 p.m.

**HUMAN SERVICES SE** 8129 SE Malden St, Portland Feb 12 .....1-3 p.m.

1435 NE 81st Ave Ste 100 Portland

Feb 14 ...... 12-2 p.m. PORTLAND

**RESCUE MISSION** 111 W Burnside, Portland

Feb 14 ...... 8-10 a.m. Feb 28 ...... 8-10 a.m. **SALVATION ARMY** 

**SOCIAL SERVICES FAIR** 5325 N Williams Ave Portland Feb 8...11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

**UNION GOSPEL MISSION** 3 NW 3rd, Portland Feb 26

### WASHINGTON COUNTY **BEAVERTON LIBRARY** 12375 SW 5th St, Beaverton

Feb 13 .....1-3 p.m.

**CHINESE NEW YEAR** 

**CULTURAL FAIR** Convention Center Feb 2......10 a.m.-5 p.m.

VIETNAMESE NEW YEAR Holiday Inn Portland Airport Feb 2.....9 a.m.-4 p.m.

For information, or to host our team, call Tamara at 503-416-1479 or Caleb at 503-416-4883.

careoregon.org/gomobile

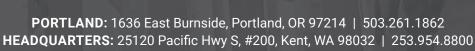


# A career you can be proud of.

Being a carpenter isn't just a job. It's a way of life. We're devoted to strengthening the lives of our members with steady work, wealth and personal growth.

We work together to lead the building industry in safety, training and compensation. We create rich lives for our members and partners.

To learn more about becoming a union carpenter, go to **NWCarpenters.org**. ORTHWEST



**NWCarpenters.org** 



More than 20,000 members in the Pacific Northwest.