

Initiative 594 Talking Points

Initiative 594 would NOT PREVENT CRIMINALS FROM OBTAINING FIREARMS. It would create a HUGE REGULATORY SCHEME that would disproportionately burden law-abiding firearm sellers and purchasers. It would cause an EXPENSIVE DIVERSION OF SCARCE LAW ENFORCEMENT RESOURCES. It would be UNENFORCEABLE. Further, it would create a MASSIVE GOVERNMENT DATABASE of law-abiding handgun owners.

INITIATIVE 594:

- ✓ *Would Do Nothing About Mental Health Background Checks*
Nothing proposed in I-594 does anything to improve America's failing mental health system, mental health reporting, or the kinds of mental health background checks run on prospective firearm purchasers. The background checks currently done are not as complete as they could be given the records that are included. Imposing "universal background checks" will just produce more inaccurate and incomplete checks.
- ✓ *Would Not Stop Dangerously Unstable People*
Proponents of I-594 are making false promises. The perpetrators of the same high-profile crimes that have been used to promote I-594 and similar proposals elsewhere either passed background checks to obtain the firearms they used in their crimes, or obtained their firearms in ways, such as theft, in which background checks are irrelevant.
- ✓ *Would Not Stop Criminals*
I-594 will not stop dangerous criminals. Criminals will violate I-594 like they break other laws. Criminals will still acquire firearms where they do now: the black market, straw purchasers, theft and illicit sources such as drug dealers. You can't change criminal behavior by criminalizing lawful behavior.
- ✓ *Creates Over-burdensome Regulatory Excess*
I-594 regulates ALL "transfers" of firearms (NOT just sales, but gifts and loans). The definition of "transfer" is so broad and the exceptions are so narrow that virtually every time the mere possession of a firearm changes hands, the exchange is subject to the bureaucracy imposed by I-594, including paperwork, fees, doubled waiting periods, taxes, and government registration in the case of handguns! Even concealed pistol license (CPL) holders, who have undergone a fingerprint-based background check, are not exempt from the provisions of I-594!
- ✓ *Opposed by Rank & File Law Enforcement*
Law enforcement officers see I-594 for what it really is: an *unfunded mandate* that diverts scarce law enforcement resources away from keeping violent criminals off our streets and simply restricts private firearms ownership without increasing public safety.
- ✓ *Criminalizes Loans Between Family & Friends*
I-594 is 18 pages of costly and confusing regulatory excess and is punitive to lawful firearms owners. Proponents want you to "pass it so you can find out what's in it." Before you vote, *consult your attorney* to see how it criminalizes your behavior. Want to buy your sister-in-law a gun as a gift so she can protect herself? Want to loan your adult sons shotguns so they can go hunting? Loaning a friend a rifle for the afternoon (and have her return it to you)? *I-594 makes you a criminal unless you drive to a gun store to get permission and pay the fee every time!* Even a police officer who loans a personal firearm to a fellow officer could face criminal prosecution.

✓ *Imposes Significant Costs on Firearm Transfers*

I-594 authorizes a fee to be charged -- whatever can be considered fair market value—almost every time a private firearm “transfer” occurs, even for gifts and loans. All private transfers are also subject to use tax, payable to the State Department of Revenue. The records created by these dealer transfers will give the government the necessary tool to single out and collect more tax from law-abiding firearm owners!

✓ *Expands the Massive Government Database of Law-Abiding Handgun Owners*

Under I-594, every time the possession of a handgun changes hands, even temporarily, the transfer may become subject to the burdensome provisions of I-594, including entry into the government registration database of law-abiding handgun owners currently maintained by the Washington State Department of Licensing.

✓ *Severely Restricts Youth Hunting & Sporting Uses*

Even though Washington law allows a person under 16 to obtain a hunting license, I-594 prohibits any youth under 18 from using the family firearm for hunting or sporting purposes unless the youth is under “direct supervision and control.” With no definition of this phrase, many common hunting practices, such as that by a father and daughter setting up tree stands 10 or more yards apart, may be criminal conduct just because I-594 isn’t clear on what would be prohibited.

✓ *Unenforceable and Unworkable*

It would be impossibly expensive to attempt to enforce the provisions of I-594. Law enforcement officials would be spending their entire budgets checking up on law-abiding firearm owners. The federal and state governments rarely prosecute persons who fail a background check when illegally attempting to purchase firearms under existing state and federal law. Instead of advocating for enforcement of the existing law and for prosecuting every person who illegally attempts to purchase a firearm, anti-gun extremists are pushing I-594 to build a massive government database of law-abiding handgun owners!

✓ *Ignores the Common Threads of High-Profile Gun Crimes*

While proponents of I-594 cite to acts of gun crime in support of the need to “get something done,” I-594 disregards the common threads in recent high-profile gun crimes, where the perpetrator was already under psychiatric care or known to be mentally unstable, had passed background checks, and committed the crimes in a gun-free zone or in violation of carry laws. None of these issues are addressed by I-594!

✓ *Background Checks are Ineffective in High-Profile Gun Crimes*

Background checks and other transfer restrictions are unsuccessful at stopping crimes committed by high-profile shooters. Even proponents of private sale background checks admit these restrictions “are a mismatch” to the gun crimes that most often make the news.

✓ *Dishonesty!*

Virtually every talking point and argument put forth by the proponents of I-594 is either grossly misleading or an outright lie. Lies = Hidden agenda! Intentional Deception is NOT Without Motive! When people lie to you, they are trying to get you to believe something or do something you would not otherwise do if you knew the truth.

I-594 is NOT about “Universal Background Checks” because criminals would ignore these checks like any other law!

I-594 is REALLY “Universal Handgun Registration” because ALL law-abiding handgun owners would be registered!