

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5312

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Law & Justice, February 23, 1995

Title: An act relating to children possessing firearms.

Brief Description: Regulating firearm possession by children.

Sponsors: Senators Rasmussen, Oke, Winsley, Haugen and Palmer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 2/14/95, 2/23/95 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5312 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Smith, Chair; C. Anderson, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Haugen, Johnson, Long, McCaslin, Roach and Schow.

Staff: Cynthia Runger (786-7717)

Background: Except in a few circumstances enumerated in the firearms statute, a person under the age of 18 years of age may not lawfully possess a firearm. One exception to the firearms age restriction permits children, regardless of age, to hunt or trap as long as they have a valid hunting or trapping license.

There is concern that some children are too young to responsibly handle a firearm.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Restrictions are imposed on children who hunt or trap. No children under the age of 14 are permitted to hunt or trap unless they have a valid hunting or trapping license and are supervised by an adult.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill removes the provision that restricts children under the age of ten from hunting or trapping with a firearm.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill will protect the public from armed and unattended children.

Testimony Against: This bill discriminates against children.

Testified: Senator Rasmussen, prime sponsor (pro); Jim Williams, Tacoma Sports Club (pro); Philip Indovina, hunter education instructor (pro); Merton Cooper (con).