
Judiciary Committee

HB 2347

Title: An act relating to the possession of spring blade knives.

Brief Description: Concerning the possession of spring blade knives.

Sponsors: Representatives Dammeier, Kelley, Wilcox, Van De Wege, Pearson, Hurst, Zeiger, Seaquist, Rodne, Ladenburg, Hope, Green, Klippert and Moscoso.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Exempts firefighters and rescuers, Washington state patrol officers, active military members, and concealed pistol license holders from certain prohibitions against spring blade knives.

Hearing Date: 1/25/12

Staff: Omeara Harrington (786-7136).

Background:

There is a general prohibition against manufacturing, selling, disposing of, or possessing certain weapons, including:

- slung shots;
- sand clubs;
- metal knuckles;
- spring blade knives;
- knives with blades that are automatically released by a spring or other mechanism; or
- knives with blades that open by the force of gravity or by a downward, outward, or centrifugal movement of the knife.

It is a gross misdemeanor to violate this prohibition. However, law enforcement officers may possess spring blade knives while on official duty, and may not be prosecuted for possession of a spring blade knife when transporting the knife to and from its place of storage.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill:

The exemption allowing law enforcement officers to possess, transfer, and store spring blade knives for purposes of official duty is expanded to include firefighters and other rescue members, Washington state patrol officers, and active military members. Spring blade knives may be manufactured, sold, transported, distributed, or possessed pursuant to contracts with these actors' agencies. Additionally, holders of valid concealed pistol licenses may possess spring blade knives.

The general term “spring blade knife” is to be used to describe the various kinds of knives prohibited in the dangerous weapons statute. Knives with a mechanism designed to create a bias toward closure of the blade that must be overcome by physical exertion are not spring blade knives.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.