

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5448

As of February 12, 1999

Title: An act relating to possession of firearms on public transit.

Brief Description: Prohibiting possession of firearms on public transit.

Sponsors: Senators Prentice, Kohl-Welles, Fraser, Fairley, McAuliffe, Shin, Haugen, Costa and Kline.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 2/15/99.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Staff: Harry Steinmetz (786-7421)

Background: The state currently restricts possession of firearms in a number of ways. There are restrictions on the type of guns that may be possessed, such as sawed-off shotguns. There are restrictions on who may possess a gun, such as convicted felons. Lastly, there are locations where it is illegal for the general public to carry a firearm, such as schools.

Public transportation has been accorded heightened protection from drug sales. The sale, delivery, manufacture of a controlled substance, or possession of a controlled substance with the intent to sell, deliver or manufacture on a public transit vehicle or in a public transit stop shelter creates an enhancement of up to double the penalty.

Recent incidents about public transit vehicles have raised concerns for the safety of public transit employees and passengers.

Summary of Bill: A new crime is created making it illegal to carry a firearm onto, or possess a firearm on, any means of public transit. A violation is a gross misdemeanor, punishable by up to one year in county jail. Additionally, any person convicted is prohibited from applying for a concealed pistol license for three years.

Exceptions to the crime include: persons with valid concealed pistol licenses; law enforcement personnel in the performance of their duties; public transit security personnel; and persons on official duties for the military.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 11, 1999.

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