

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6389

As Reported by House Committee On:
Judiciary

Title: An act relating to weapons in commercial service airports.

Brief Description: Prohibiting weapons in restricted access areas of commercial service airports.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Senators Brandland, Haugen, Esser, Rasmussen, Kline, Murray and Kohl-Welles).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Judiciary: 2/27/04 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Prohibits, with exceptions, the possession of weapons, including firearms, within the restricted access areas of a commercial service airport.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Lantz, Chair; Moeller, Vice Chair; Carrell, Ranking Minority Member; McMahan, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Campbell, Flannigan, Kirby, Lovick and Newhouse.

Staff: Bill Perry (786-7123).

Background:

Weapons, including firearms, are prohibited statewide in certain designated places. These places are:

- The restricted access areas of a jail or law enforcement facility;
- Courtrooms and other areas adjacent to or used in conjunction with court proceedings;
- The restricted access areas of a public mental health facility; and

· Taverns and other places that are made off-limits to persons under age 21 by liquor control board rules.

Additional rules apply to the prohibition on weapons in court facilities. A local jurisdiction with a court facility is required to provide storage for weapons at court facilities. A locked box must be provided, or an official must be designated, so that a person entering the court facility may check his or her weapon. The local jurisdiction is liable for the loss of or damage to a weapon left in a locked box or with an official. Local jurisdictions must also post restricted areas of the court facility with notice that weapons are prohibited.

Various "dangerous" weapons, as well as firearms, are generally prohibited on school facilities. In addition, local jurisdictions are authorized to prohibit firearms in a stadium or convention center.

It is a gross misdemeanor to possess a weapon in any of these places. However, certain persons are exempt from some or all of these prohibitions. Law enforcement personnel are exempt from all of the prohibitions. Military or security personnel are also exempt from all of the prohibitions, but only while engaged in official duties.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Weapons are prohibited in restricted access areas of a commercial airport. Restricted areas are those that are part of an airport security plan approved by the Federal Transportation Security Administration. Restricted areas include passenger screening checkpoints at and beyond the point where passengers initiate the screening process. Restricted areas do not include drives, general parking areas and walkways, shops, and areas normally open to unscreened passengers or visitors. Restricted areas must be designated by signs indicating that weapons are prohibited.

Law enforcement personnel are exempt from the prohibition, as are military and security personnel who are engaged in official duties.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:

The substitute bill defines restricted areas as part of a federally approved security plan. It also defines a checkpoint as the point at which a passenger initiates a screening and requires that restricted areas be posted.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This bill, with the amendment, is the same as the House bill already passed.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Oke, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.