



Legislation Text

File #: 2012-0216, **Version:** 2

Clerk 05/31/2012

A MOTION calling on the Washington state Legislature to adopt legislation relating to juvenile firearms and weapons crimes and that those penalties allow juveniles adjudicated for offenses in which a firearm is used to be committed to the Juvenile Rehabilitation Authority.

WHEREAS, even though the county has made significant inroads in reducing violent crime and taken firearms off the street through targeted law enforcement task forces, gun crimes committed by juveniles continues to be a serious problem in King County, and

WHEREAS, law enforcement and prosecutors have attributed the decline in violent crime rates in King County to the coordinated prosecution of offenders using guns using state and federal laws that have severe penalties for repeat felons who use guns in the commission of a new crime or simply have firearms in their possession, and

WHEREAS, the county has seen the increase in the number of violent crimes committed by teenagers with guns, even for those juvenile offenders that have been previously adjudicated for other crimes, and

WHEREAS, current state firearms laws for juvenile offenders allow juveniles to have up to five adjudications for offenses with firearms before the juvenile can be sent to longer incarceration terms in the state's Juvenile Rehabilitation Authority, thus jeopardizing public safety and increasing the risk of random gun violence, and

WHEREAS, prosecutors and law enforcement agencies in King County and throughout the state have called for changes to current Washington state law to increase penalties for juveniles who commit crimes with

guns or possess illegal firearms, allowing for longer sentences to state incarceration, and

WHEREAS, the state's Juvenile Rehabilitation Authority has significant resources for the treatment and intervention into the lives of juvenile offenders with severe criminality, and the time because of longer periods of incarceration to ensure that treatment is effective, has had considerable success in treating offenders and ultimately reducing future recidivism, and

WHEREAS, the inability of the county's juvenile court to sentence juvenile offenders who use or possess firearms in the commission of crimes to the state upon first adjudication, rather than after several subsequent convictions, harms public safety and removes from the court the ability to use the state's effective intervention and treatment capacity through the Juvenile Rehabilitation Authority, and

WHEREAS, the King County prosecutor's office along with county law enforcement agencies are calling for the current laws to be amended to give prosecutors the laws they need to convict juvenile criminals that use or possess guns and protect public safety;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

We call on the Washington state Legislature to adopt an act relating to juvenile firearms and weapons crimes that amends RCW 13.40.127 and 13.40.193, and that reenacts and amends RCW 13.40.0357, to establish penalties that allow those juveniles adjudicated for offenses in which a firearm is used to be committed to the Juvenile Rehabilitation Authority.