

To: Senate Committee on Law and Justice

304 15<sup>th</sup> Ave SW  
Room 4  
Olympia WA 98504

Re: Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2118 – Establishing additional requirements for the business operations of licensed firearms dealers.

Position: Oppose

Date: February 18, 2024

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Chair Dhingra and members of the Senate Committee on Law and Justice,

Our nonprofit and charitable organizations represent the interests of tens of thousands of Washingtonians who engage in wildlife and habitat conservation and care deeply about hunter and firearms safety. However, ESHB 2118 would have a devastating impact on our efforts. The burdens that this legislation would create on the small sporting goods businesses that we depend on cannot be understated. Please oppose ESHB 2118.

To raise funds for important missions, many nonprofit organizations like ours conduct family-friendly fundraising events where people purchase raffle tickets or participate in auctions in the hopes of winning donated prizes such as art, vacations, gift certificates, and sporting goods. What draws many attendees to these events is the opportunity to win a firearm such as a shotgun or hunting rifle to be used for hunting, procuring food, or participating in school clay target team sports.

Our attendees are often people from middle-class families who collectively raise significant revenue for our missions and help build the next generation of community leaders and committed conservationists.

To comply with both Washington and federal firearms laws we utilize local sporting goods retailers who have a Federal Firearms License (FFL) to secure the firearms and conduct the required background checks to facilitate a legal transfer to eligible customers. These businesses staff our events before, during, and after the banquets. They play a critical role in helping us raise funds that go directly to on-the-ground conservation in the state.

If ESHB 2118 is implemented into law every FFL in the state will be required to spend tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars to comply. The video surveillance and storage requirements alone under the latest compromise would cost over \$100,000. FFLs will also be subject to restrictive and redundant record keeping that will add significantly to their overhead. We reasonably fear that many small sporting goods businesses will go out of business because of these burdens, and we are certain that because of this increased overhead that the price of their goods will need to increase exponentially. This will drive up the cost to hunters, recreational shooters, and law-abiding gun owners with no likely impact on violent crime in the state.

Small sporting goods stores support conservation in Washington. In addition to their direct support of our non-profit fundraising, the sale of firearms and ammunition generates important revenue for conservation through the Pittman-Robertson federal excise tax. Last year Washington received [\\$22.6 million](#) for wildlife management from this fund. Due to the negative impact on small sporting goods retailers outlined above, we are also concerned that this bill may lead to a decrease in hunter license and tag sales because of the decreased access to the sporting goods required to partake in our community. Fees generated from hunting licenses and tags, along with federal funds generated from the Pittman Robertson tax, make up the bulk of funding used for wildlife management activities.

Please protect responsible small businesses and the conservation infrastructure they support. Please oppose ESHB 2118.

Sincerely,

American Bear Foundation – Washington State Chapter

Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation

Ducks Unlimited

Northeast Washington Wildlife Group

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Safari Club International

Washington Waterfowl Association