



2009 SENATE BILL 44

February 5, 2009 – Introduced by Senators DARLING, HARSDORF, OLSEN, SCHULTZ and SULLIVAN, cosponsored by Representatives GUNDERSON, RICHARDS, MURTHA, KERKMAN, VOS, FIELDS, LOTHIAN, TOWNSEND, STONE, BIES, BALLWEG, KAUFERT, LEMAHIEU, NYGREN, PETERSEN, VAN ROY and SPANBAUER. Referred to Committee on Judiciary, Corrections, Insurance, Campaign Finance Reform, and Housing.

1 **AN ACT** *to renumber and amend* 51.20 (13) (cv) 1., 941.29 (9) and 968.20 (1r);
2 *to amend* 51.20 (13) (cv) 2., 51.20 (13) (cv) 3., 51.20 (13) (cv) 4., 51.20 (16) (gm),
3 175.35 (1) (at), 941.29 (1) (e) and 941.29 (2) (d); and *to create* 51.20 (13) (cv) 1.
4 a. and b., 51.20 (13) (cv) 1m., 51.30 (4) (b) 28., 51.45 (13) (i), 54.10 (3) (f), 55.12
5 (10), 175.35 (2g) (d), 941.29 (1) (em), 941.29 (9) (b), 968.20 (1r) (b), 968.20 (1r)
6 (c), 968.20 (1r) (d) and 968.20 (1r) (e) of the statutes; **relating to:** adjudications
7 for involuntary commitment, appointment of a guardian of the person, and
8 protective placement or protective services, background checks for the
9 purchase of handguns, and requiring the exercise of rule-making authority.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Under current law, if a person seeks to purchase a handgun from a licensed handgun dealer, the dealer must ask the Department of Justice (DOJ) to conduct a background check on the person. In conducting the background check, DOJ searches DOJ records to determine whether the person is ineligible to possess a firearm under state law, but state law does not explicitly require DOJ to determine whether federal law bars the person from possessing a firearm based on criteria not covered by state law. This bill requires DOJ, when conducting a background check on a prospective

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handgun purchaser, to check whether the person has been the subject of a court order or finding that is based on a determination that the person's mental health would render the person ineligible under federal law to possess a firearm.

This bill requires courts to determine whether a person would be ineligible under federal law to possess a firearm during proceedings for involuntary commitment for persons found by the court to be mentally ill, drug dependent, or developmentally disabled and to be dangerous, during proceedings for appointment of a guardian of the person for an individual found by the court to be incompetent, and, if not previously determined, during proceedings under which a court orders protective placement or protective services (mental health proceeding). If the court determines that federal law prohibits the person from possessing a firearm, the court must order the person not to possess a firearm, order the seizure of any firearm the person owns, and inform the person that he or she would be committing a felony if he or she possessed a firearm. The court must then convey the disqualified status to DOJ which may use that information only during background checks conducted when the person seeks to purchase a handgun or under rules that DOJ promulgates in order to provide information to the national instant criminal background check system.

Specifically, to determine ineligibility under federal law at a mental health proceeding, a court must determine if the person has been "adjudicated as a mental defective" or "committed to a mental institution," as defined in federal law. Under federal law, "adjudicated as a mental defective" means a determination by a court, board, commission, or other lawful authority that a person, as a result of a marked subnormal intelligence, or a mental illness, incompetency, condition, or disease either is a danger to himself or herself or to others or lacks the mental capacity to contract or manage his or her own affairs. This determination includes a finding of insanity by a court in a criminal case and persons found incompetent to stand trial or found not guilty by reason of lack of mental responsibility pursuant to the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Federal law defines "committed to a mental institution" as a formal commitment of a person to a mental institution by a court, board, commission, or other lawful authority. The term includes a commitment to a mental institution involuntarily, commitment for mental defectiveness or mental illness, and commitments for other reasons such as for drug use. The term does not include a person in an institution for observation or a voluntary admission to a mental institution.

If, at a mental health proceeding, the court finds a person ineligible under federal law to possess a firearm, the person may petition a court to cancel the order. A court must grant the petition if the court determines that the person is not likely to act in a manner dangerous to public safety and that the granting of the petition would not be contrary to public interest. The court must then convey the change in status to DOJ so that DOJ may update the information provided during background checks for handgun purchases and the information provided to the national instant criminal background check system.

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For further information see the *state and local* fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

1 **SECTION 1.** 51.20 (13) (cv) 1. of the statutes is renumbered 51.20 (13) (cv) 1.
2 (intro.) and amended to read:

3 51.20 (13) (cv) 1. (intro.) If the court makes the disposition under par. (a) 3., 4.,
4 4m., or 5. and the court determines, based on evidence presented on the issue of the
5 subject individual's dangerousness, that there is a substantial probability that the
6 individual may use a firearm to cause physical harm to himself or herself or endanger
7 public safety, the court shall prohibit the individual from possessing order the
8 individual not to possess a firearm, order the seizure of any firearm owned by the
9 individual, and inform the individual of the requirements and penalties under s.
10 941.29. if the court determines any of the following:

11 **SECTION 2.** 51.20 (13) (cv) 1. a. and b. of the statutes are created to read:

12 51.20 (13) (cv) 1. a. Based on evidence presented on the issue of the individual's
13 dangerousness, there is a substantial probability that the individual may use a
14 firearm to cause physical harm to himself or herself or endanger public safety.

15 b. Under 18 USC 922 (g) (4), the individual is prohibited from possessing a
16 firearm.

17 **SECTION 3.** 51.20 (13) (cv) 1m. of the statutes is created to read:

18 51.20 (13) (cv) 1m. a. If a court orders an individual under subd. 1. not to
19 possess a firearm based on a determination under subd. 1. b., the individual may
20 petition that court or the court in the county where the individual resides to cancel
21 the order.

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1 b. The court considering the petition under subd. 1m. a. shall grant the petition
2 if the court determines that the circumstances regarding the disposition under par.
3 (a) 3., 4., 4m., or 5. and the individual's record and reputation indicate that the
4 individual is not likely to act in a manner dangerous to public safety and that the
5 granting of the petition would not be contrary to public interest.

6 c. If the court grants the petition under subd. 1m. b., the court shall cancel the
7 order under subd. 1. and order the return of any firearm ordered seized under subd.
8 1. on the basis of a determination under subd. 1. b.

9 **SECTION 4.** 51.20 (13) (cv) 2. of the statutes is amended to read:

10 51.20 (13) (cv) 2. ~~A prohibition on~~ An order prohibiting the possession of a
11 firearm under subd. 1. based on a determination under subd. 1. a. shall remain in
12 effect until the commitment order and any subsequent consecutive commitment
13 orders expire and the court determines, based on evidence presented on the issue of
14 the subject individual's dangerousness, that there is no longer a substantial
15 probability that the individual may use a firearm to cause physical harm to himself
16 or herself or endanger public safety. If the court makes this determination, it shall
17 cancel the ~~prohibition order~~ and order the return of any firearm ordered seized under
18 subd. 1. on the basis of a determination under subd. 1. a.

19 **SECTION 5.** 51.20 (13) (cv) 3. of the statutes is amended to read:

20 51.20 (13) (cv) 3. In lieu of ordering the seizure under subd. 1., the court may
21 designate a person to store the firearm until the ~~prohibition order under subd. 1.~~
22 based on the determination under subd. 1. a. has been canceled under subd. 2. or sub.
23 (16) (gm) or until the order under subd. 1. based on the determination under subd.
24 1. b. has been canceled under subd. 1m. c.

25 **SECTION 6.** 51.20 (13) (cv) 4. of the statutes is amended to read:

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1 51.20 (13) (cv) 4. If the court ~~prohibits~~ orders a subject individual ~~from~~
2 ~~possessing not to possess~~ a firearm under subd. 1. ~~or based on a determination under~~
3 ~~subd. 1. a. or b.,~~ cancels a prohibition under subd. 2. or sub. (16) (gm) an order issued
4 under subd. 2. 1. based on a determination under subd. 1. a., or cancels under subd.
5 1m. c. an order issued under subd. 1. based on a determination under subd. 1. b., the
6 court clerk shall notify the department of justice of that fact and provide any
7 information identifying the subject individual that is necessary to permit an
8 accurate involuntary commitment history record search, or an accurate firearms
9 restrictions record search, under s. 175.35 (2g) (c). No other information from the
10 subject individual's court records may be disclosed to the department of justice
11 except by order of the court. The department of justice may disclose information
12 provided under this subdivision only as part of an involuntary commitment history
13 record search, or a firearms restrictions record search, under s. 175.35 (2g) (c) or
14 under rules the department of justice promulgates under s. 175.35 (2g) (d).

15 **SECTION 7.** 51.20 (16) (gm) of the statutes is amended to read:

16 51.20 (16) (gm) Upon a request under par. (a), a court may cancel the
17 ~~prohibition order not to possess a firearm issued~~ under sub. (13) (cv) 1. based on a
18 determination under sub. (13) (cv) 1. a. if the court determines, based on evidence
19 presented on the issue of the subject individual's dangerousness, that there no longer
20 is a substantial probability that the individual may use a firearm to cause physical
21 harm to himself or herself or endanger public safety. If a court ~~cancels a prohibition~~
22 an order issued under sub. (13) (cv) 1. based on a determination under sub. (13) (cv)
23 1. a. under this paragraph, the court clerk shall notify the department of justice of
24 that fact and provide any information identifying the subject individual that is
25 necessary to permit an accurate involuntary commitment record search, or a

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1 firearms restrictions record search, under s. 175.35 (2g) (c). No other information
2 from the subject individual's court records may be disclosed to the department of
3 justice except by order of the court.

4 **SECTION 8.** 51.30 (4) (b) 28. of the statutes is created to read:

5 51.30 (4) (b) 28. To the department of justice, under the requirements of ss.
6 51.20 (13) (cv) 4. and 51.45 (13) (i) 4.

7 **SECTION 9.** 51.45 (13) (i) of the statutes is created to read:

8 51.45 (13) (i) 1. If a court orders commitment of a person under this subsection,
9 the court shall determine if, under 18 USC 922 (g) (4), the person is prohibited from
10 possessing a firearm. If the person is prohibited, the court shall order the person not
11 to possess a firearm, order the seizure of any firearm owned by the person, and
12 inform the person of the requirements and penalties under s. 941.29.

13 2. a. If a court orders a person under subd. 1. not to possess a firearm, the person
14 may petition that court or the court in the county where the person resides to cancel
15 the order.

16 b. The court considering the petition under subd. 2. a. shall grant the petition
17 if the court determines that the circumstances regarding the commitment under this
18 subsection and the person's record and reputation indicate that the person is not
19 likely to act in a manner dangerous to public safety and that the granting of the
20 petition would not be contrary to public interest.

21 c. If the court grants the petition under subd. 2. b., the court shall cancel the
22 order under subd. 1. and order the return of any firearm ordered seized under subd.

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1 3. In lieu of ordering the seizure under subd. 1., the court may designate a
2 person to store the firearm until the order under subd. 1. is canceled under subd. 2.
3 c.

4 4. If the court orders under subd. 1. a person not to possess a firearm or cancels
5 under subd. 2. c. an order issued under subd. 1., the court clerk shall notify the
6 department of justice of the order or cancellation and provide any information
7 identifying the person that is necessary to permit an accurate firearms restrictions
8 record search under s. 175.35 (2g) (c). No other information from the person's court
9 records may be disclosed to the department of justice except by order of the court.
10 The department of justice may disclose information provided under this subdivision
11 only as part of a firearms restrictions record search under s. 175.35 (2g) (c) or under
12 rules the department of justice promulgates under s. 175.35 (2g) (d).

13 **SECTION 10.** 54.10 (3) (f) of the statutes is created to read:

14 54.10 (3) (f) 1. If the court appoints a guardian of the person under this
15 subsection, the court shall determine if, under 18 USC 922 (g) (4), the individual is
16 prohibited from possessing a firearm. If the individual is prohibited, the court shall
17 order the individual not to possess a firearm, order the seizure of any firearm owned
18 by the individual, and inform the individual of the requirements and penalties under
19 s. 941.29.

20 2. a. If a court orders under subd. 1. an individual not to possess a firearm, the
21 individual may petition that court or the court in the county where the individual
22 resides to cancel the order.

23 b. The court considering the petition under subd. 2. a. shall grant the petition
24 if the court determines that the circumstances regarding the appointment of a
25 guardian under this subsection and the individual's record and reputation indicate

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1 that the individual is not likely to act in a manner dangerous to public safety and that
2 the granting of the petition would not be contrary to public interest.

3 c. If the court grants the petition under subd. 2. b., the court shall cancel the
4 order under subd. 1. and order the return of any firearm ordered seized under subd.
5 1.

6 3. In lieu of ordering the seizure under subd. 1., the court may designate a
7 person to store the firearm until the order under subd. 1. is canceled under subd. 2.
8 c.

9 4. If the court orders under subd. 1. an individual not to possess a firearm or
10 cancels under subd. 2. c. an order issued under subd. 1., the court clerk shall notify
11 the department of justice of the order or cancellation and provide any information
12 identifying the individual that is necessary to permit an accurate firearms
13 restrictions record search under s. 175.35 (2g) (c). No other information from the
14 individual's court records may be disclosed to the department of justice except by
15 order of the court. The department of justice may disclose information provided
16 under this subdivision only as part of a firearms restrictions record search under s.
17 175.35 (2g) (c) or under rules the department of justice promulgates under s. 175.35
18 (2g) (d).

19 **SECTION 11.** 55.12 (10) of the statutes is created to read:

20 55.12 (10) (a) If a court orders protective services or protective placement of an
21 individual under this section and if an order has not been made under s. 54.10 (3) (f)
22 for the individual, the court shall determine if, under 18 USC 922 (g) (4), the
23 individual is prohibited from possessing a firearm. If the individual is prohibited,
24 the court shall order the individual not to possess a firearm, order the seizure of any

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1 firearm owned by the individual, and inform the individual of the requirements and
2 penalties under s. 941.29.

3 (b) 1. If a court orders under par. (a) an individual not to possess a firearm, the
4 individual may petition that court or the court in the county where the individual
5 resides to cancel the order.

6 2. The court considering the petition under subd. 1. shall grant the petition if
7 the court determines that the circumstances regarding the protective services or
8 protective placement order under this section and the individual's record and
9 reputation indicate that the individual is not likely to act in a manner dangerous to
10 public safety and that the granting of the petition would not be contrary to public
11 interest.

12 3. If the court grants the petition under subd. 2., the court shall cancel the order
13 under par. (a) and order the return of any firearm ordered seized under par. (a).

14 (c) In lieu of ordering the seizure under par. (a), the court may designate a
15 person to store the firearm until the order under par. (a) is canceled under par. (b)
16 3.

17 (d) If the court orders under par. (a) an individual not to possess a firearm or
18 cancels under par. (b) 3. an order issued under par. (a), the court clerk shall notify
19 the department of justice of the order or cancellation and provide any information
20 identifying the individual that is necessary to permit an accurate firearms
21 restriction record search under s. 175.35 (2g) (c). No other information from the
22 individual's court records may be disclosed to the department of justice except by
23 order of the court. The department of justice may disclose information provided
24 under this paragraph only as part of a firearms restriction record search under s.

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1 175.35 (2g) (c) or under rules the department of justice promulgates under s. 175.35
2 (2g) (d).

3 **SECTION 12.** 175.35 (1) (at) of the statutes is amended to read:

4 175.35 (1) (at) “Firearms restrictions record search” means a search of
5 department of justice records to determine whether a person seeking to purchase a
6 handgun is prohibited from possessing a firearm under s. 941.29. “Firearms
7 restriction record search” includes a criminal history record search, a search to
8 determine whether a person is ~~prohibited from possessing~~ has been ordered not to
9 possess a firearm under s. 51.20 (13) (cv) 1. based on a determination under s. 51.20
10 (13) (cv) 1. a., a search in the national instant criminal background check system to
11 determine whether a person has been ordered not to possess a firearm under s. 51.20
12 (3) (cv) 1., based on a determination under s. 51.20 (13) (cv) 1. b., 51.45 (13) (i) 1., 54.10
13 (3) (f) 1., or 55.12 (10) (a), a search to determine whether the person is subject to an
14 injunction under s. 813.12 or 813.122, or a tribal injunction, as defined in s. 813.12
15 (1) (e), issued by a court established by any federally recognized Wisconsin Indian
16 tribe or band, except the Menominee Indian tribe of Wisconsin, that includes notice
17 to the respondent that he or she is subject to the requirements and penalties under
18 s. 941.29 and that has been filed with the circuit court under s. 806.247 (3), and a
19 search to determine whether the person is prohibited from possessing a firearm
20 under s. 813.125 (4m).

21 **SECTION 13.** 175.35 (2g) (d) of the statutes is created to read:

22 175.35 (2g) (d) 1. The department of justice shall promulgate rules to convey
23 information in a timely manner to the national instant criminal background check
24 system regarding individuals ordered not to possess a firearm under s. 51.20 (13) (cv)

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1 1., based on a determination under s. 51.20 (13) (cv) 1. b., or ordered not to possess
2 a firearm under s. 51.45 (13) (i) 1., 54.10 (3) (f) 1., or 55.12 (10) (a).

3 2. The department of justice shall promulgate rules to convey information in
4 a timely manner to the national instant criminal background check system
5 regarding the cancellation under s. 51.20 (13) (cv) 1m. c., 51.45 (13) (i) 2. c., 54.10 (3)
6 (f) 2. c., or 55.12 (10) (b) 3. of an order not to possess a firearm.

7 **SECTION 14.** 941.29 (1) (e) of the statutes is amended to read:

8 941.29 (1) (e) Committed for treatment under s. 51.20 (13) (a) and ordered not
9 to possess a firearm under s. 51.20 (13) (cv) 1. based on a determination under s. 51.20
10 (13) (cv) 1. a.

11 **SECTION 15.** 941.29 (1) (em) of the statutes is created to read:

12 941.29 (1) (em) Ordered not to possess a firearm under s. 51.20 (13) (cv) 1. based
13 on a determination under s. 51.20 (13) (cv) 1. b. or ordered not to possess a firearm
14 under s. 51.45 (13) (i) 1., 54.10 (3) (f) 1., or 55.12 (10) (a).

15 **SECTION 16.** 941.29 (2) (d) of the statutes is amended to read:

16 941.29 (2) (d) The person possesses a firearm while subject to the court order,
17 as specified in sub. (1) (e), (em), or (g).

18 **SECTION 17.** 941.29 (9) of the statutes is renumbered 941.29 (9) (a) and
19 amended to read:

20 941.29 (9) (a) This section does not apply to a person specified in sub. (1) (e) if
21 the prohibition order under s. 51.20 (13) (cv) 1. has been based on a determination
22 under s. 51.20 (13) (cv) 1. a. is canceled under s. 51.20 (13) (cv) 2. or (16) (gm).

23 **SECTION 18.** 941.29 (9) (b) of the statutes is created to read:

24 941.29 (9) (b) This section does not apply to a person specified in sub. (1) (em)
25 if the order under s. 51.30 (13) (cv) 1. based on a determination under s. 51.20 (13)

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1 (cv) 1. b. is canceled under s. 51.20 (13) (cv) 1m. c., if the order under s. 51.45 (13) (i)
2 1. is canceled under s. 51.45 (13) (i) 2. c., if the order under s. 54.10 (3) (f) 1. is canceled
3 under s. 54.10 (3) (f) 2. c., or if the order under s. 55.12 (10) (a) is canceled under s.
4 55.12 (10) (b) 3.

5 **SECTION 19.** 968.20 (1r) of the statutes is renumbered 968.20 (1r) (a) and
6 amended to read:

7 968.20 (1r) (a) If the seized property is a firearm ordered seized under s. 51.20
8 (13) (cv) 1. based on a determination under s. 51.20 (13) (cv) 1. a., the court that issued
9 that order shall order the firearm returned if the ~~prohibition order~~ order under s. 51.20 (13)
10 (cv) 1. ~~has been based on a determination under s. 51.20 (13) (cv) 1. a. is~~ canceled
11 under s. 51.20 (13) (cv) 2. or (16) (gm).

12 **SECTION 20.** 968.20 (1r) (b) of the statutes is created to read:

13 968.20 (1r) (b) If the seized property is a firearm ordered seized under s. 51.20
14 (13) (cv) 1. based on a determination under s. 51.20 (13) (cv) 1. b., the court that issued
15 that order shall order the firearm returned if the order under s. 51.20 (13) (cv) 1.
16 based on a determination under s. 51.20 (13) (cv) 1. b. is canceled under s. 51.20 (13)
17 (cv) 1m. c.

18 **SECTION 21.** 968.20 (1r) (c) of the statutes is created to read:

19 968.20 (1r) (c) If the seized property is a firearm ordered seized under s. 51.45
20 (13) (i) 1., the court that issued that order shall order the firearm returned if the order
21 under s. 51.45 (13) (i) 1. is canceled under s. 51.45 (13) (i) 2. c.

22 **SECTION 22.** 968.20 (1r) (d) of the statutes is created to read:

23 968.20 (1r) (d) If the seized property is a firearm ordered seized under s. 54.10
24 (3) (f) 1., the court that issued that order shall order the firearm returned if the order
25 under s. 54.10 (3) (f) 1. is canceled under s. 54.10 (3) (f) 2. c.

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1 **SECTION 23.** 968.20 (1r) (e) of the statutes is created to read:

2 968.20 (1r) (e) If the seized property is a firearm ordered seized under s. 55.12
3 (10) (a), the court that issued that order shall order the firearm returned if the order
4 under s. 55.12 (10) (a) is canceled under s. 55.12 (10) (b) 3.

5 **SECTION 24. Nonstatutory provisions.**

6 (1) Using the procedure under section 227.24 of the statutes, the department
7 of justice shall promulgate rules required under section 175.35 (2g) (d) of the
8 statutes, as created by this act, for the period before the effective date of the
9 permanent rules promulgated under that section, but not to exceed the period
10 authorized under section 227.24 (1) (c) and (2) of the statutes. Notwithstanding
11 section 227.24 (1) (a), (2) (b), and (3) of the statutes, the department of justice is not
12 required to provide evidence that promulgating a rule under this subsection as an
13 emergency rule is necessary for the preservation of public peace, health, safety, or
14 welfare and is not required to provide a finding of an emergency for a rule
15 promulgated under this subsection.

16 **SECTION 25. Initial applicability.**

17 (1) The renumbering and amendment of section 51.20 (13) (cv) 1. of the statutes
18 and the creation of section 51.20 (13) (cv) 1. a. and b. of the statutes first apply to
19 dispositions made on the effective date of this subsection.

20 (2) The treatment of section 51.45 (13) (i) of the statutes first applies to
21 commitments ordered on the effective date of this subsection.

22 (3) The treatment of section 54.10 (3) (f) of the statutes first applies to
23 appointments made on the effective date of this subsection.

24 (4) The treatment of section 55.12 (10) of the statutes first applies to court
25 orders made on the effective date of this subsection.

