

House Research Act Summary

CHAPTER: 194

SESSION: 2012 Regular Session

TOPIC: Firearms; creating an exception to the general prohibition on silencers

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Overview

Background: A *firearm silencer*, or *sound suppresser*, is a portable device that attaches to the barrel of a firearm and functions to *suppress* the sound of shooting that firearm. Under the National Firearms Act of 1934 (NFA), firearm silencers have been licensed, taxed, and strictly regulated by the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (BATFE or ATF).

Some states, including Minnesota, further generally prohibit the sale and possession of silencers by civilians. Under Minnesota law, the only exceptions are for certain police and wildlife management officials, as well as for federally licensed collectors and authorized museums.

As amended, this bill would create another exception to the Minnesota prohibition on the sale and possession of firearm silencers - i.e., for federally licensed firearms importers, manufacturers, and dealers, when acting in full compliance with all federal requirements under that license. The amendment would allow such licensed persons to possess and sell firearm silencers, as well as firearms tested with silencers to:

- federal, state, and local government agencies;
- units of the U.S. Armed Forces; and
- persons who are federally licensed by the BATFE as a firearms importer, manufacturer, or dealer who are acting in full compliance with all federal requirements under that license.

Effective Date: August 1, 2012.