

HB 1936 -- CARRYING OF CONCEALED FIREARMS

SPONSOR: Taylor

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on General Laws by a vote of 8 to 4. Voted "Do Pass" by the Rules-Legislative Oversight Committee by a vote of 8 to 3.

This bill makes changes to the list of locations an individual can carry a concealed firearm within this state and the list of locations an individual with a concealed carry permit can carry a concealed firearm within the state. This bill also prohibits the state, political subdivisions, and public institutions of higher learning from imposing any policies or contractual requirements that would have the effect of prohibiting employees or students from the carrying of concealed firearms into locations where concealed carry is not otherwise prohibited by law.

No changes have been made to the penalties for carrying a concealed firearm in locations prohibited under these sections.

This bill is similar to HB 630 (2017).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that gun free zones just create opportunities for shooters. Establishing gun free zones has not ended mass shooting. Law enforcement can't be everywhere; they can't stop all crimes in progress. People need to be able to defend themselves. Supporters say there are numerous examples of instances where a shooting could have been stopped or prevented if bystanders or victims had the opportunity to carry a weapon. Supporters say that the 1st amendment allows people to say horrible things but we don't restrict that right, so we shouldn't restrict 2nd amendment rights.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Taylor; Dave Guest; Damien Johnson; Conor Martin; Austin Petersen; James Pounds; Dale Roberts; Missouri Firearms Coalition Organization; William Shafer; Tony Shepherd; Lloyd Sloan; and Linda Yeager.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that they are concerned that allowing guns on college campuses will lead to more injuries or deaths. Opponents are concerned that college students often act impulsively and students who may be drinking heavily will have access to firearms. Campus safety personnel stressed that opportunity theft is the number one crime on campus so there is a high likelihood that guns could be stolen and used in irresponsible ways. Opponents asked that college campuses continue to be allowed to decide for themselves whether it is safe and appropriate to allow concealed carry on campus. That decision is currently made

by campus safety personnel who usually have a law enforcement background. Those individuals stress that most campuses are not in fact gun free zones, security officers are armed. Other opponents stressed the increasing incidents of gun violence in cities like St. Louis and reminded the committee that what is good for some parts of Missouri is not necessary good for others. Opponents explained that patients in hospitals often become disoriented or experience violent emotions and can present a security risk--nurses and other staff would fear for their safety if guns were permitted and may therefore choose not to work at public hospitals. Opponents recommended alternative means to combat or minimize school violence such as infrastructure security and more resource officers.

Testifying against the bill were Damen Alexander; Heather Andrew; American Federation of Teachers-Missouri; Henry Cohen; Regina Cross; Christie Daly; Jackson County Legislature; Missouri National Education Association; Alexis Engelbrecht-Villafane; Jimmie M. Edwards, City of St. Louis; Holly Bickmeyer; Bi-State Development Agency; Cheryl Hibbeler; Candace Kuby; Missouri State University; Missouri Community College Association; Hugh L. Mills; Katie Mullen; Cox Health; BJC Health Care; Scott Rhoad, University of Central Missouri; Marjorie Sable; Lisa Sanning; Paul Wagner, Council on Public Higher Education; Erika Waller; Sheriff Rick Walter; Suzy Ward; William Warren, III, Moms Demand Action; Mary Wegerski; Mary Windmiller, Moms Demand Action; Public Transit Association; and the Missouri Gaming Association.

Testifying on the bill was Jeffrey J. McClain.