

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Judiciary

BILL: SB 616

INTRODUCER: Senator Steube

SUBJECT: Concealed Weapons or Firearms

DATE: March 6, 2017

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Stallard	Cibula	JU	Pre-meeting
2.	_____	_____	GO	_____
3.	_____	_____	RC	_____

I. Summary:

SB 616 authorizes a person who has a concealed weapons and firearms license to carry a concealed weapon or firearm into a courthouse for as long as it takes him or her to report to courthouse security or management. Then, the licensee must follow security or management personnel's instructions for removing, securing, and storing the item, or the licensee must surrender the item until the licensee is leaving the courthouse.

As such, the bill does not permit anyone to carry a concealed weapon or firearm throughout a courthouse or into a courtroom.

II. Present Situation:

Concealed Carry of Firearms, Weapons, or Electric Weapons or Devices

Lawful Concealed Carry of Weapons or Firearms

Chapter 790, F.S., regulates who can carry weapons and firearms and where and how a person may carry them. In general, this chapter prohibits a person from carrying a concealed firearm unless the person has a concealed weapon or firearm license.¹

¹ See ss. 790.01 and 790.06, F.S.; but see s.790.025(3), F.S., which provides that the prohibition against carrying a concealed weapon and the licensure requirement do not apply in certain circumstances.

Florida's concealed carry licensing scheme is set forth at s. 790.06, F.S. The license only permits the concealed carry of handguns and certain non-firearm weapons.² Currently, there are roughly 1.7 million Floridians holding a standard concealed carry license.³

To obtain a license, one must submit an application to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. And the Department *must* grant the license to each applicant who:⁴

- Is a resident of the United States and a citizen of the United States or a permanent resident alien of the United States, as determined by the United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, or is a consular security official of a foreign government that maintains diplomatic relations and treaties of commerce, friendship, and navigation with the United States and is certified as such by the foreign government and by the appropriate embassy in this country;
- Is 21 years of age or older;
- Does not suffer from a physical infirmity which prevents the safe handling of a weapon or firearm;
- Is not ineligible to possess a firearm by virtue of having been convicted of a felony;
- Has not been committed for the abuse of a controlled substance or been found guilty of a crime relating to controlled substances within a 3-year period immediately preceding the date on which the application is submitted;
- Does not chronically and habitually use alcoholic beverages or other substances to the extent that his or her normal faculties are impaired;
- Desires a legal means to carry a concealed weapon or firearm for lawful self-defense;
- Demonstrates competence with a firearm;⁵
- Has not been adjudicated an incapacitated person in a guardianship proceeding, unless 5 years have elapsed since the applicant's restoration to capacity by court order;
- Has not been committed to a mental institution, unless the applicant produces a certificate from a licensed psychiatrist that he or she has not suffered from disability for at least 5 years before the date of submission of the application;
- Has not had adjudication of guilt withheld or imposition of sentence suspended on any felony, or any misdemeanor crime of domestic violence, unless 3 years have elapsed since probation or any other conditions set by the court have been fulfilled, or expunction has occurred;
- Has not been issued an injunction that is currently in force and effect and that restrains the applicant from committing acts of domestic violence or acts of repeat violence; and
- Is not prohibited from purchasing or possessing a firearm by any other provision of Florida or federal law.

² "For the purposes of this section, concealed firearms and concealed weapons are defined as a handgun, electronic weapon or device, tear gas gun, knife, or billie, but the term does not include a machine gun as defined" elsewhere in statute. Section 790.06(1), F.S.

³ As of February 28, 2017, 1,721,862 Floridians held a standard concealed carry license. Fla. Dept. of Ag., *Number of Licensees by Type*, http://www.freshfromflorida.com/content/download/7471/118627/Number_of_Licensees_By_Type.pdf (last visited March 2, 2017)

⁴ Section 790.06(2), F.S. Accordingly, Florida is referred to as a "shall-issue" state, as opposed to a "may-issue" state. Also, the Department must deny a license to an applicant who meets criteria set forth in s. 790.06(3), F.S.

⁵ See s. 790.06(2)(h), F.S., for the list of courses and other means of demonstrating competency, and for the required documentation that one must present to the state relative to this provision.

The licensing statute strongly implies that licensees may carry concealed throughout Florida, as a general matter.⁶ However, the statute also expressly states that the license does not permit a licensee to carry a concealed weapon or firearm into any:⁷

- *Courthouse*;
- *Courtroom*;⁸
- Place of nuisance, such as a brothel or place where criminal gang activity takes place repeatedly;
- Police, sheriff, or highway patrol station;
- Detention facility, prison, or jail;
- Polling place;
- Meeting of the governing body of a county, public school district, municipality, or special district;
- Meeting of the Legislature or a committee of the Legislature;
- School, college, or professional athletic event not related to firearms;
- Elementary or secondary school facility or administration building;
- Career center;
- Portion of an establishment licensed to dispense alcoholic beverages for consumption on the premises, which portion of the establishment is primarily devoted to such purpose;
- College or university facility unless the licensee is a registered student, employee, or faculty member of such college or university and the weapon is a stun gun or nonlethal electric weapon or device designed solely for defensive purposes and the weapon does not fire a dart or projectile;
- Airport's passenger terminal and sterile area, provided that no person shall be prohibited from carrying any legal firearm into the terminal, which firearm is encased for shipment for purposes of checking such firearm as baggage to be lawfully transported on any aircraft; or
- Place where the carrying of firearms is prohibited by federal law.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Currently, a person who has a license to carry a concealed weapon or firearm apparently may carry a concealed weapon or firearm throughout the state, as a general matter. The license, however, does not authorize the carrying of a concealed weapon or firearm into several places listed in the licensing statute, including courthouses. As a result, a licensee who carries a concealed weapon or firearm into a courthouse or other prohibited place commits a second degree misdemeanor, which is punishable by up to 60 days in jail and a fine not to exceed \$500.

Under the bill, a licensee may carry a concealed weapon or firearm into a courthouse if the licensee approaches security or management personnel upon arrival at a courthouse and notifies them of the presence of the weapon or firearm. Then, the licensee must:

⁶ The licensing statute expressly states that licensees are not subject to the statute that criminalizes concealed carry. The licensing statute also expressly states that the license does not authorize carrying into a list of places. Thus the licensing statute strongly implies, though nowhere expressly states, that licensees may carry generally throughout Florida.

⁷ Section 790.06(12)(a), F.S. (Emphasis added)

⁸ "Except that nothing in this section would preclude a judge from carrying a concealed weapon or determining who will carry a concealed weapon in his or her courtroom." Section 790.06(12)(a)5., F.S. Note that this provision does not refer to *firearms*, but only *weapons*.

- Follow the security or management personnel's direction for removing, securing, and storing such weapon or firearm, or
- Temporarily surrender the weapon or firearm to the security or management personnel, who shall store the weapon or firearm in a locker, safe, or other secure location and return the weapon or firearm to the licensee when he or she is exiting the courthouse.

As such, the bill apparently does not permit carrying a firearm past the entryway of most courthouses.⁹ Also, the bill clearly does not authorize a licensee to carry into any courtroom.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

This bill does not require counties or municipalities to spend funds or limit their authority to raise revenue or receive state-shared revenues as specified in Article VII, s. 18 of the Florida Constitution.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

Courthouses may need to purchase lockers to store handguns for persons who have a concealed weapon or firearm license.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

⁹ However, some courthouses have no security checkpoints at their entrances.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends section 790.06, Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
