

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: CS/CS/CS/HB 753 School Safety

SPONSOR(S): Judiciary Committee; Justice Appropriations Subcommittee; K-12 Subcommittee; Steube and others

TIED BILLS: None **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** CS/SB 968

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) K-12 Subcommittee	9 Y, 4 N, As CS	Brink	Ahearn
2) Justice Appropriations Subcommittee	8 Y, 4 N, As CS	McAuliffe	Lloyd
3) Judiciary Committee	12 Y, 3 N, As CS	Aziz	Havlicak

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The bill allows school superintendents, upon approval of the district school board, to create a school safety designee program through which the school superintendent may designate one or more individuals to carry a concealed weapon or firearm on school property. Weapons or firearms may only be carried in a concealed manner and must be on the individual's person at all times while performing official school duties. The bill requires school safety designees to possess a concealed weapon license.

The bill establishes criteria and training requirements which school safety designees must meet. The bill also requires a level 2 background screening for school safety designees who have not already had a level 2 background screening by the school board and authorizes school superintendent to require additional background screenings for all school safety designees.

The bill requires district school board policies and procedures for emergencies and emergency drills to include active shooters and hostage situations. Active-shooter situation procedures for each school must be developed in consultation with a local law enforcement agency.

The bill requires each district school superintendent to provide recommendations to improve school safety and security to the first responding local law enforcement agencies.

The bill requires school districts and private schools to allow first-responding law enforcement agencies to tour the school campuses once every three years. Any recommendations relating to school safety and emergency issues based on a campus tour must be documented by the district or private school.

The bill specifies that a district school board may commission one or more school safety officers on each school campus.

The bill specifies that the required training will be created and defined by the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission which is administered by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). According to FDLE, the cost to develop and implement the training required by this bill would be \$157,927. This bill provides an appropriation of \$157,927 nonrecurring general revenue funds.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2014.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Present Situation

Gun Free School Zones

Federal Law

Federal law prohibits an individual from possessing a firearm at a place the person knows, or has reasonable cause to believe, is a school zone.¹ The prohibition does not apply to possession of a firearm:

- On private property not part of school grounds;
- By individuals licensed to possess a firearm by the state or a political subdivision of the state in which the school zone is located if the licensing law requires law enforcement verification that the individual meets the law's qualifications to receive the license before issuance;
- That is unloaded and stored in a locked container on a motor vehicle;
- Authorized pursuant to a program approved by the school in the school zone;
- By an individual pursuant to a contract between a school and the individual or an employer of the individual;
- By a law enforcement officer acting in his or her official capacity; or
- That is unloaded and is possessed by an individual who is authorized by the school to cross school grounds for the purpose of gaining access to public or private lands open to hunting.²

Federal law also prohibits the knowing or reckless discharge or attempted discharge of a firearm by a person at a place that the person knows is a school zone.³ The prohibition does not apply to the discharge of a firearm:

- On private property not part of school grounds;
- Authorized pursuant to a program approved by the school in the school zone;
- Pursuant to a contract entered into between a school and the individual or an employer of the individual; or
- By a law enforcement officer acting in his or her official capacity.⁴

Federal law further provides that it is not Congress's intent to occupy the field of firearms regulation, unless there is a direct, positive, and irreconcilable conflict between a federal and state firearms law regulating the same subject matter. Thus, states may regulate firearms in a manner that is consistent with federal law.⁵

Florida Law

¹ 18 U.S.C. s. 922(q)(2)(A). An element of the offense is that the person knowingly possess a firearm that has moved in or that otherwise affects interstate or foreign commerce.

² 18 U.S.C. s. 922(q)(2)(B).

³ 18 U.S.C. s. 922(q)(3)(A). An element of the offense is that the firearm have been moved in or otherwise affect interstate or foreign commerce.

⁴ 18 U.S.C. s. 922(q)(3)(B).

⁵ 18 U.S.C. s. 927.

Florida law prohibits, with exceptions, the possession or discharge of weapons or firearms at a preschool, elementary school, middle school, junior high school, secondary school, career center, or postsecondary school, whether public or nonpublic.⁶ The law prohibits:

- Exhibition of a weapon⁷ or firearm in the presence of another in a rude, careless, angry, or threatening manner on school property or a school bus, at a school bus stop or school-sponsored event, or within 1,000 feet⁸ of a K-12 public or private school, during school hours or at the time of a school activity.⁹ Such exhibition is a third degree felony,¹⁰ unless it is made in lawful self-defense.¹¹
- Possession of a weapon¹² or firearm, “except as authorized in support of school-sanctioned activities, at a school-sponsored event or on the property of any school, school bus, or school bus stop.”¹³ Penalties for such possession vary, as follows:
 - A person who willfully and knowingly possesses a firearm unlawfully on school property or a school bus or at a school bus stop or school-sponsored activity or event commits a third degree felony.¹⁴
 - A person who fails to securely store a firearm, enabling a minor to access it who then unlawfully possesses it on school property or a school bus or at a school bus stop or school-sponsored activity or event, commits a second degree misdemeanor.¹⁵
 - A person who discharges a firearm while unlawfully possessing it on school property or a school bus or at a school bus stop or school-sponsored activity or event, commits a second degree felony,¹⁶ unless discharged for lawful defense of self or others or for a lawful purpose.¹⁷

The penalties for unlawful exhibition or possession of a firearm or weapon differ for licensed concealed weapons permit holders. Violations by such individuals constitute a second degree misdemeanor.¹⁸

The law provides several exceptions allowing individuals to carry a firearm on school property or a school bus or at a school bus stop or school-sponsored activity or event without express approval by school officials. A firearm may be carried:

- In a case to a school-approved firearms program;
- In a case to a career center having a firearms training range; or

⁶ Section 790.115(2)(a), F.S.

⁷ “Weapon” means any dirk, knife, metallic knuckles, slungshot, billie, tear gas gun, chemical weapon or device, or other deadly weapon except a firearm or a common pocketknife, plastic knife, or blunt-bladed table knife. Section 790.001(13), F.S. Exhibiting a sword, sword cane, electric weapon or device, destructive device, razor blade, box cutter, or common pocketknife is also prohibited. Section 790.115(1), F.S.

⁸ The prohibition on exhibition of a firearm or weapon on private real property within 1,000 feet of a school does not apply to the property owner or those whose presence is authorized by the owner. Section 790.115(1), F.S.

⁹ Section 790.115(1), F.S.

¹⁰ A third degree felony is punishable by term of imprisonment not exceeding five years and a fine not exceeding \$5,000. Sections 775.082(3)(d) and 775.083(1)(c), F.S.

¹¹ Section 790.115(1), F.S.

¹² In addition to firearms and items defined as weapons, this provision also applies to possession of an electric weapon or device, destructive device, and a razor blade or box cutter. Section 790.115(2)(a), F.S.

¹³ Section 790.115(2)(a), F.S.

¹⁴ Section 790.115(2)(c)1, F.S. A third degree felony is punishable by up to five years imprisonment and a \$5,000 fine. Sections 775.082 and 775.083, F.S.

¹⁵ Section 790.115(2)(c)2, F.S. This does not apply if the firearm was securely stored and the minor obtains the firearm as a result of an unlawful entry by any person or to members of the Armed Forces, National Guard, State Militia, or law enforcement officers, with respect to firearm possession by a minor which occurs during or incidental to the performance of their official duties. A second degree misdemeanor is punishable by up to 60 days in county jail and a \$500 fine. Sections 775.082 and 775.083, F.S.

¹⁶ A second degree felony is punishable by a term of imprisonment not exceeding 15 years and a fine not exceeding \$10,000. Sections 775.082 and 775.083, F.S.

¹⁷ Section 790.115(2)(d), F.S.

¹⁸ Sections 790.115(2)(e) and 790.06(12)(a) and (d), F.S.

- In a vehicle by a person who is at least 18 years of age and the firearm is securely encased or not readily accessible for immediate use.¹⁹

School districts may adopt policies waiving the vehicle exception for purposes of student and campus parking privileges.²⁰

Concealed Weapons Permits

Florida law authorizes the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) to issue a concealed weapons permit (CWP) to individuals who meet statutory qualifications. Among other criteria, CWP applicants must pass a fingerprint-based criminal background check and complete a CWP training class. The CWP is a photo identification that enables the holder to carry a concealed weapon or firearm in public, except for specified locations, e.g., school or college athletic events; elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools; and career centers.²¹

School Safety

Emergency Policies

Florida law requires each district school board to formulate policies and procedures for emergency response drills and actual emergencies. These policies must include procedures for responding to various emergencies, such as fires, natural disasters, and bomb threats. Commonly used alarm system responses for specific types of emergencies must be incorporated into such policies.²²

The *Safety and Security Best Practices* (Best Practices) is a self-assessment tool that each school district must use to annually assess the effectiveness of district emergency response policies. Among other “best practices,” the self-assessment suggests that school districts:

- Develop a district-wide plan for potential attacks against school sites;
- Develop a checklist with step-by-step emergency procedures for use in every classroom which includes, among other things, procedures for weapons and hostage situations; and
- Share emergency plans and procedures with designated school and school district personnel, identify training for all types of school staff and staff that require specialized training, and incorporate such training into the Master Plan for In-Service Training.²³

Each district school superintendent must make recommendations to the school board for improving emergency response policies based upon the self-assessment results. The self-assessment results and superintendent’s recommendations must be addressed in a publicly noticed school board meeting. The results of the self-assessment and any school board action on the superintendent’s recommendations must be reported to the Commissioner of Education within 30 days after the school board meeting.²⁴

School Safety Officers

School safety officers are certified law enforcement officers who are employed by either a law enforcement agency or a district school board. A school safety officer has the authority to carry firearms

¹⁹ Section 790.115(2)(a), F.S.

²⁰ *Id.*; see, e.g., Policies 1217, 3217, 4217, 5772, and 7217, Leon County School Board, <http://www.neola.com/leon-fl/> (last visited April 15, 2014).

²¹ Section 790.06(12)(a), F.S.

²² Section 1006.07(4)(a), F.S. Additionally, district school boards must establish model emergency management and preparedness procedures for weapon-use and hostage situations; hazardous materials or toxic chemical spills; weather emergencies, including hurricanes, tornadoes, and severe storms; and exposure resulting from man-made emergencies. Section 1006.07(4)(b), F.S.

²³ Section 1006.07(6), F.S.; Florida Department of Education, *District Safety and Security Best Practices*, <http://www.fldoe.org/EM/security-practices.asp> (last visited April 15, 2014). The self-assessment is developed by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability. *Id.*

²⁴ Section 1006.07(6), F.S.

or other weapons when performing official duties.²⁵ School boards are authorized, but not required, to commission and assign to schools school safety officers for the protection of school personnel, property, and students within the school district. School boards may enter into mutual aid agreements with one or more law enforcement agencies. A school safety officer's salary may be paid jointly by the school board and the law enforcement agency, if mutually agreed to.²⁶

Background Screening

Florida law requires school district employees to undergo a fingerprint-based background screening as a condition of employment.²⁷ Instructional and noninstructional personnel²⁸ and noninstructional school district employees and contracted personnel²⁹ must undergo Level 2 background screening.³⁰ Level 2 background screening requires individuals to be screened against a statutorily prescribed list of 51 criminal offenses.³¹ Such employees must be rescreened every five years.³²

Available Firearms and Security Training

Individuals seeking a Class "D" license as a private security officer must complete at least 40 hours of professional training by a provider licensed by DACS.³³ The training addresses legal liability issues and court procedures; personal security; traffic and crowd control; fire detection and life safety; crime and accident prevention; terrorism awareness; first aid; emergency response procedures; ethics; and patrol, communication, observation, report writing, and interviewing techniques.³⁴

Individuals holding a Class "G" statewide firearm license must annually complete four hours of firearms recertification training taught by a licensed firearms instructor as a condition of license renewal.³⁵ Such training includes a review of legal aspects of firearms use and when to use a gun, operational firearms safety and mechanical training, and range-based firearms requalification.³⁶ In lieu of proof of statewide firearms recertification training, such individuals may submit:

- Proof of current certification as a law enforcement officer or correctional officer and completion of law enforcement firearms requalification training annually during the previous two years of the licensure period;
- Proof of current certification as a federal law enforcement officer and receipt of law enforcement firearms training administered by a federal law enforcement agency annually during the previous two years of the licensure period; or
- A Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission Instructor Certificate, National Rifle Association Private Security Firearm Instructor Certificate, or a firearms instructor certificate issued by a federal law enforcement agency and proof of having completed requalification training during the previous two years of the licensure period.³⁷

²⁵ Section 1006.12(2)(a) and (c), F.S.

²⁶ Section 1006.12(2)(b) and (d), F.S.

²⁷ Sections 1012.32, 1012.465, and 1012.467, F.S. Private schools participating in educational choice scholarship programs must also submit fingerprints of employees and contracted personnel with direct student contact to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. *See ss. 943.0542 and 1002.421(2)(i), F.S.*

²⁸ Instructional and non-instructional personnel are individuals who are hired or contracted to fill positions that require direct contact with students in any public school. Section 1012.32(2), F.S.

²⁹ Non-instructional school district employees and contracted personnel are individuals who are permitted access to school grounds when students are present; who have direct contact with students; or who have access to, or control of, school funds. Section 1012.465(1), F.S.

³⁰ Sections 1012.32(1)-(2), 1012.465(2), and 1012.56(10), F.S.

³¹ *See ss. 435.04, 1012.32(2), 1012.465(1), and 1012.56(10), F.S.*

³² Sections 1012.465(2) and 1012.56(10)(b), F.S.

³³ Section 493.6303(4)(a), F.S.

³⁴ Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, *Security Officer Training Curriculum Guide* (July 2010)(on file with House Judiciary Committee)[hereinafter *Security Officer Training*].

³⁵ Section 493.6113(b), F.S.

³⁶ *Security Officer Training, supra* note 34.

³⁷ Section 493.6113(3)(b), F.S.

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill allows school superintendents, upon approval of the district school board, to create a school safety designee program. Under the program, each superintendent may designate one or more employees or volunteers to carry a concealed weapon or firearm on school property. Weapons or firearms may only be carried in a concealed manner and must be on the designee's person at all times while performing official school duties.

The bill requires that a school safety designee be a school district employee or volunteer, licensed to carry a concealed firearm as provided by law and:

- Be a military veteran who was honorably discharged and who has not been found to have committed a firearms-related disciplinary infraction during his or her service;
- Be an active duty member of the military, the National Guard, or military reserves who has not been found to have committed a firearms-related disciplinary infraction during his or her service; or
- Be a law enforcement officer in good standing or a former law enforcement officer who has left the law enforcement agency in good standing.

The bill requires designated personnel to submit to the authorizing school superintendent proof of completion of a school safety program. The bill specifies that the required training is created and defined by the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission and that the training programs are administered by criminal justice training centers operated by the State.³⁸ The bill is silent regarding whether the designee or school district is to pay the cost of training, if any. Accordingly, each district can decide how expenses for designee training are to be borne.

The bill requires each school safety designee, if not previously screened by the school board, to undergo a level 2 background screening and provides superintendents the authority to require additional screening for all designees. The bill specifies that the state and national fingerprint processing and retention fees will be borne by the school safety designee or the school. The bill also requires the school to notify the Department of Law Enforcement regarding any person whose fingerprints have been retained but who are no longer a school safety designee.

The bill authorizes signage at school property where a school safety designee serves in his or her capacity. If the signage is posted, it must state "Authorized Armed Defense Present and Permitted."

The bill exempts school safety designees from criminal penalties for possessing a firearm on school property and discharging a weapon or firearm on school property. However, the bill makes it a second degree misdemeanor to store or leave a weapon or firearm within reach of a minor who obtains the firearm.³⁹

The bill requires district school board policies and procedures for emergencies and emergency drills to include active shooters and hostage situations. The bill requires each district school board to address active-shooter situations in the board's model emergency management and emergency preparedness procedures. The procedure for each school must be conducted in consultation with a local law enforcement agency.

³⁸ The Commission is comprised of 19 members including various law enforcement and correctional personnel, the attorney general or a proxy, and a Florida resident who is not a law enforcement or correctional personnel. The Commission establishes various training standards and training programs and requirements and performs other duties. Florida Department of Law Enforcement, *Criminal Justice Standards & Training Commission*, <http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/content/getdoc/91a75023-5a74-40ef-814d-8e7e5b622d4d/cjstc-home-page.aspx> (last visited April 15, 2014). The Criminal Justice Professionalism Division of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement provides staff support to the Commission. Florida Department of Law Enforcement, *Criminal Justice Professionalism Division*, <https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/Content/getdoc/05c013ca-a32e-48a1-aca8-df7f06854d49/CJP-Home-Page.aspx> (last visited April 15, 2014). A list of State of Florida Criminal Justice Training Centers can be found at <https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/Content/getdoc/f1431117-7788-4e70-bb0a-86d4f7717558/Training-Centers.aspx> (last visited April 15, 2014).

³⁹ A second degree misdemeanor is punishable by up to 60 days in county jail and a \$500 fine. Sections 775.082 and 775.083, F.S.

The bill requires each district school superintendent to provide recommendations to improve school safety and security to the local law enforcement agencies that are first responders to the district's school campuses. Currently, these recommendations are only provided to the district school board.⁴⁰

In addition, each district school board or private school principal or governing board must allow first-responding law enforcement agencies to tour the school campuses once every three years. Any recommendations relating to school safety and emergency issues based on a campus tour must be documented by the district or private school.

The bill specifies that a district school board may commission one or more school safety officers for the protection and safety of school personnel, property, and students on each school campus, instead of simply within the district.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Provides a statement of legislative intent.

Section 2. Amends s. 790.115, F.S., relating to possessing or discharging weapons at a school-sponsored event or on school property prohibited; penalties; exceptions.

Section 3. Amends s. 1006.07, F.S., relating to district school board duties relating to student discipline and school safety.

Section 4. Amends s. 1006.12, F.S., relating to school resource officers and school safety officers.

Section 5. Amends s. 435.04, F.S., relating to Level 2 screening standards.

Section 6. Amends s. 790.251, F.S., relating to protection of the right to keep and bear arms in motor vehicles for self-defense and other lawful purposes.

Section 7. Amends s. 921.0022, F.S., relating to Criminal Punishment Code.

Section 8. Amends s. 1012.315, F.S., relating to disqualification from employment.

Section 9. Provides an appropriation.

Section 10. Provides an effective date of July 1, 2014.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

The bill specifies that the required training will be created and defined by the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission which is administered by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). According to FDLE, School Safety Officer, Firearms Proficiency, and Active-Shooter training would be required for school safety designees as provided in this bill. The Firearms Proficiency Course and Active-Shooter Course can be developed using existing materials. The School Safety Officer Course for Civilians, however, is unique and must take into consideration all Florida statutes governing the school safety officer's authority to act. Also, the safety of the

⁴⁰ Section 1006.07(6), F.S.
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DATE: 4/15/2014

school safety officer must be addressed in the training as well as limited first responder activity, officer survival, tactical operations, and environmental considerations.

Workload that will be borne by FDLE includes: preliminary research and planning; selection of subject matter experts; staffing and planning of workshops and per diems for subject matter experts to attend; analysis and course development; and editing and final course review. Total cost are expected to be \$157,927.

This bill provides a nonrecurring appropriation of \$157,927 in general revenue funds.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

The bill is silent as to whether a fee would be charged for participation in the training and whether the training fee would be borne by the school district or the trainee.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not Applicable. This bill does not appear to affect county or municipal governments.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

On March 12, 2014, the K-12 Subcommittee adopted a strike all amendment to HB 753 and reported the bill favorably as a committee substitute. The strike all amendment addresses certain drafting concerns by:

- Exempting designated volunteers, in addition to designated school or district personnel, from laws prohibiting the concealed carrying of a firearm on school property or a district administration building, as applicable;
- Changing designee qualifications to require that designated volunteers and personnel be licensed to carry a concealed firearm as provided by law;
- Specifying that designees who are volunteers must undergo a level 2 background screening and providing principals and superintendents the authority to require additional screening for all designees;

- Clarifying that the required training is created and defined by the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission and that the training programs are administered by the State of Florida Criminal Justice Training Centers;
- Including career centers and postsecondary schools in the definition of “school;” and
- Requiring school districts and private schools to allow first-responding law enforcement agencies to tour the school campuses once every three years. Any recommendations relating to school safety and emergency issues based on a campus tour must be documented by the district or private school.

On April 2, 2014, the Justice Appropriations Subcommittee adopted two amendments and reported the bill favorable as a committee substitute. Amendment one clarifies that the state and national fingerprint processing and retention fees will be borne by the designee or the school. The bill also requires the school to notify the Department of Law Enforcement regarding any person whose fingerprints have been retained but who are no longer a designee. Amendment two provides a nonrecurring appropriation of \$157,927 in general revenue funds.

On April 11, 2014, the Judiciary Committee adopted one amendment and reported the bill favorably as a committee substitute. The amendment provides:

- Clarification in the requirements for school safety designees in that they must be an employee or volunteer who is licensed to carry a concealed weapon or firearm pursuant to s. 790.06, F.S., and be either a military veteran, active duty military member, active law enforcement officer, or a retired law enforcement officer;
- That school safety designees must submit to the school superintendent proof of completion of a school safety program created by the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission;
- A criminal penalty for school safety designees who store or leave a firearm within reach or access of a minor who obtains the firearm;
- An authorization to post a sign on school property, where a school safety designee serves, to state “Authorized Armed Defense Present and Permitted;”
- Employees or volunteers the option to accept the designation as school safety designee; and
- That school boards must create active-shooter procedures in consultation with a local law enforcement agency.

This analysis is drafted to the committee substitute as passed by the Judiciary Committee.