

HB 1474 -- SCHOOL PROTECTION OFFICERS

SPONSOR: Brattin

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on General Laws by a vote of 9 to 3.

This bill allows any school district to designate one or more elementary or secondary school teachers or administrators as a school protection officer, whose responsibilities and duties are voluntary and must be in addition to his or her normal responsibilities and duties. Any compensation for serving as a school protection officer must be funded by the local school district without using any state funds.

A school protection officer must be authorized to carry a concealed firearm in any school in the district, but he or she must keep the firearm on his or her person at all times while on school property. A person violating this provision must be removed immediately from the classroom, is guilty of a class A misdemeanor, and is subject to employment termination proceedings within the school district.

A school protection officer may detain any person the officer sees violating or the officer has reasonable grounds to believe has violated any state law or school policy. Any person detained for violation of a state law must be turned over to a law enforcement officer as soon as practically possible. Any person detained for violation of a school policy must be turned over to a school administrator as soon as practically possible. However, a person detained cannot be detained for more than four hours.

The bill specifies the requirements to be designated as a school protection officer, including requesting the designation in writing to the school district superintendent, holding a valid concealed carry endorsement, and completion of a school protection officer training program approved by the Director of the Department of Public Safety. Any school district that designates a teacher or administrator as a school protection officer must notify the department director in writing within 30 days.

A school district may revoke the designation of a person as a school protection officer for any reason. The district must immediately notify the person in writing and must notify the department director in writing within 30 days of the revocation.

The bill requires the department director to maintain a listing of all persons designated as a school protection officer and to make the list available to all law enforcement agencies. However, any identifying information collected is not considered public

information and is not subject to an information request under the Open Meetings and Records Law, commonly known as the Sunshine Law. Any school employee who discloses any information to anyone, other than those authorized to receive it, will be guilty of a class B misdemeanor and will be subject to employment termination proceedings within the school district.

Currently, a person with a valid concealed carry endorsement cannot carry a concealed firearm in any higher education institution or elementary or secondary school facility without the consent of the governing body or a school official or the district school board. The bill exempts any teacher or administrator of an elementary or secondary school who has been designated by his or her school district as a school protection officer and is carrying a firearm in a school within that district from the requirement of obtaining consent.

The bill requires the Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission to establish minimum standards for the training of school protection officers and specifies the minimum training requirements.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill helps keep schools safer and requires those who carry a weapon to be trained.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Brattin; National Rifle Association Institute for Legislative Action; and Missourians for Personal Safety.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.