

HB 282 -- FIREARMS

SPONSOR: Schnelting

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Emerging Issues by a vote of 10 to 4. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 5 to 3.

Currently, it is a crime to board a bus with a dangerous or deadly weapon or carry such a weapon in a terminal.

This bill allows a concealed carry permit holder to lawfully carry firearms on public transportation, as defined in the bill. Anyone with a permit may also carry a firearm while traveling by bus. This bill does not apply to property of Amtrak or any partnership in which Amtrak engages.

This bill expands the listed items that satisfy the requirement that an applicant for a concealed carry permit demonstrate knowledge of firearms safety training to include, for active duty military service members, receipt of a pistol marksmanship recognition.

Currently, an applicant is not eligible for a concealed carry permit or a Missouri lifetime or extended concealed carry permit if the applicant has pled guilty to, entered a plea of nolo contendere, or been convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment of a term exceeding one year or has pled guilty to or entered a plea of nolo contendere to one or more misdemeanor offenses involving crimes of violence within a five-year period immediately preceding application for the permit. This bill removes the ban on eligibility for a concealed carry permit or a Missouri lifetime or extended concealed carry permit if the applicant has pled guilty to or entered a plea of nolo contendere of such crimes.

This bill expands the list of persons exempted from certain prohibitions on the unlawful use of weapons as provided for in 571.030, RSMo, to now include certain retired judiciary members and current and former members of the General Assembly.

This bill lowers the age requirement from at least 19 to 18 years of age or older for concealed carry permits.

This bill is similar to SCS HB 1462 (2022).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that violent crimes on public transportation are common and a real threat to law-abiding citizens, exponentially increasing in recent years. This bill

promotes protection of vulnerable citizens. Those in possession of concealed carry permits (ccw) are not a threat, but are instead some of the most responsible and law-abiding citizens. A majority of states currently allow for the concealed carry of firearms on public transit. This bill allows people to exercise a fundamental right and to protect themselves, it does not encourage any particular type of behavior. Current law prohibiting the carrying of firearms on public transit discourages many people to use public transit.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Schnelting; National Rifle Association; Corbett Sova; Mark Buckner; Susan Myers; William W Bland, Western Missouri Shooters Alliance; Jenni Oliveira; Carl Smart, Western Missouri Shooters Alliance; Diana Alfieri; Harold Cole; Jerry Riggs; and Victor Alfieri.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that firearms on public transit do not make people safer, nor do they make people feel safer. This bill encourages people to carry firearms on public transit, and introducing more weapons onto public transit does not promote public safety. Metro organizations have the safety of passengers as a highest priority and are largely opposed to legislation such as this. Transit providers are responsive to their riders, and riders have overwhelmingly expressed they do not want more firearms on public transit. Missouri already has a higher rate of violence than the national average for places people are already allowed to carry firearms. More firearms do not result in people being safer; instead, it puts more people in harm's way.

Testifying in person against the bill were City Utilities of Springfield; Kansas City Area Transportation Authority; Gerald Stegeman, City of Jefferson - Transit; Kimberly Cella, Missouri Public Transit Association; Kevin B. Scott, Bi-State Development Agency; Mo Public Transit Association; Greater St. Louis, Inc.; City of Kansas City; and Greater of Kansas City Chamber of Commerce.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.