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HOUSE BILL NO. 1876

Offered January 13, 2025

Prefiled January 6, 2025

A BILL to amend and reenact § 18.2-283.2 of the Code of Virginia, relating to carrying a firearm or explosive material within Capitol Square or building owned or leased by the Commonwealth; exemptions; public institutions of higher education; penalty.

Patrons—Callsen, Anthony, Cohen, Feggans, LeVere Bolling, Askew, Bennett-Parker, Bulova, Carr, Clark, Cousins, Gardner, Glass, Hayes, Helmer, Henson, Hope, Krizek, Lopez, Maldonado, Martinez, McQuinn, Mundon King, Price, Reid, Seibold, Shin, Sickles, Simon, Simonds, Sullivan, Thomas, Tran, Ward and Watts

Referred to Committee on Public Safety

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 18.2-283.2 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 18.2-283.2. Carrying a firearm or explosive material within Capitol Square and the surrounding area, into a building owned or leased by the Commonwealth, etc.; penalty.

A. For the purposes of this section, "Capitol Square and the surrounding area" means (i) the grounds, land, real property, and improvements in the City of Richmond bounded by Bank, Governor, Broad, and Ninth Streets, and the sidewalks of Bank Street extending from 50 feet west of the Pocahontas Building entrance to 50 feet east of the entrance of the Capitol of Virginia.

B. It is unlawful for any person to carry any firearm as defined in § 18.2-308.2:2 or explosive material as defined in § 18.2-308.2 within (i) the Capitol of Virginia; (ii) Capitol Square and the surrounding area; (iii) any building owned or leased by the Commonwealth or any agency thereof; or (iv) any office where employees of the Commonwealth or any agency thereof are regularly present for the purpose of performing their official duties.

C. A violation of this section is punishable as a Class 1 misdemeanor. Any firearm or explosive material carried in violation of this section shall be subject to seizure by a law-enforcement officer and forfeited to the Commonwealth and disposed of as provided in § 19.2-386.28.

D. The provisions of this section shall not apply to the following while acting in the conduct of such person's official duties: (i) any law-enforcement officer as defined in § 9.1-101; (ii) any authorized security personnel; (iii) any active military personnel; (iv) any fire marshal appointed pursuant to § 27-30 when such fire marshal has police powers provided by § 27-34.2:1; or (v) any member of a cadet corps who is recognized by a public institution of higher education while such member is participating in an official ceremonial event for the Commonwealth.

E. The provisions of clause (ii) of subsection B shall not apply to (i) any State Police officer who is off-duty or (ii) any retired State Police officer who has participated in annual firearms training and has qualified to the standards required of active law-enforcement officers in the Commonwealth, in accordance with subsection C of § 18.2-308.016.

The provisions of clauses (iii) and (iv) of subsection B shall not apply to (a) any State Police officer who is off-duty; (b) any retired State Police officer who has participated in annual firearms training and has qualified to the standards required of active law-enforcement officers in the Commonwealth, in accordance with subsection C of § 18.2-308.016; (c) any retired law-enforcement officer who has participated in annual firearms training, has qualified pursuant to subsection C of § 18.2-308.016, who is visiting a gun range owned or leased by the Commonwealth; (d) any of the following employees authorized to carry a firearm while acting in the conduct of such employee's official duties: (1) a bail bondsman as defined in § 9.1-185, (2) an employee of the Department of Corrections or a state juvenile correctional facility, (3) an employee of the Department of Conservation and Recreation, or (4) an employee of the Department of Wildlife Resources; (e) any individual carrying a weapon into a courthouse who is exempt under § 18.2-283.1; (f) any ~~property~~ individual within a building owned or operated by a public institution of higher education who possesses a weapon as part of such public institution of higher education's curriculum or activities as approved through the law-enforcement or public safety unit of the institution or as part of any organization authorized by such public institution of higher education to possess weapons, as approved through the law-enforcement or public safety unit of the institution, while conducting its programs or activities within such building; (g) any state park; or (h) any magistrate acting in the conduct of the magistrate's official duties.

F. Notice of the provisions of this section shall be posted conspicuously along the boundary of Capitol Square and the surrounding area and at the public entrance of each location listed in subsection B, and no person shall be convicted of an offense under subsection B if such notice is not posted at such public

56 entrance, unless such person had actual notice of the prohibitions in subsection B.

57 *G. Notwithstanding the provisions of clause (f) of subsection E, the governing board of a public institution*  
58 *of higher education may adopt a policy that is enforceable under the law that prohibits the possession,*  
59 *carrying, or transportation of any firearm, ammunition, or component or combination thereof in any building*  
60 *owned or operated by such public institution of higher education.*

61 *Any such policy may include security measures that are designed to reasonably prevent the unauthorized*  
62 *access of such buildings that are open to the public, such as the use of metal detectors and increased use of*  
63 *security personnel.*

64 *No policy adopted by a public institution of higher education under the provisions of this subsection shall*  
65 *apply to the activities of (i) a Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps program operated at a public or*  
66 *private institution of higher education in accordance with the provisions of 10 U.S.C. § 2101 et seq. or (ii)*  
67 *any intercollegiate athletics program operated by a public or private institution of higher education and*  
68 *governed by the National Collegiate Athletic Association or any club sports team recognized by a public or*  
69 *private institution of higher education where the sport engaged in by such program or team involves the use*  
70 *of a firearm. Such activities shall follow strict guidelines developed by such institutions for these activities*  
71 *and shall be conducted under the supervision of staff officials of such institutions.*

72 **2. That the provisions of this act may result in a net increase in periods of imprisonment or**  
73 **commitment. Pursuant to § 30-19.1:4 of the Code of Virginia, the estimated amount of the necessary**  
74 **appropriation cannot be determined for periods of imprisonment in state adult correctional facilities;**  
75 **therefore, Chapter 2 of the Acts of Assembly of 2024, Special Session I, requires the Virginia Criminal**  
76 **Sentencing Commission to assign a minimum fiscal impact of \$50,000. Pursuant to § 30-19.1:4 of the**  
77 **Code of Virginia, the estimated amount of the necessary appropriation cannot be determined for**  
78 **periods of commitment to the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice.**