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## SENATE BILL NO. 496

## AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Joint Conference Committee  
on March 14, 2026)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Marsden)

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 18.2-283.2 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 18.2-308.7:1, relating to handguns in unattended motor vehicles.*

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That § 18.2-283.2 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 18.2-308.7:1 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 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~~ *Except as provided in subsection G*, 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, and 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 owned or operated by a public institution of higher education; (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 entrance, unless such person had actual notice of the prohibitions in subsection B.

G. *The provisions of this section shall not apply to any member of the General Assembly who leaves a handgun in an unattended motor vehicle pursuant to § 18.2-308.7:1 when such vehicle is parked in any parking structure reserved for members of the General Assembly under § 2.2-1172.*

**§ 18.2-308.7:1. Firearm in unattended motor vehicle; penalty.**

A. *For purposes of this section:*

"Handgun" means any pistol or revolver or other firearm originally designed, made, and intended to fire single or multiple projectiles by means of an explosion of a combustible material from one or more barrels when held in one hand.

"Vehicle" has the same meaning as ascribed to "motor vehicle" in § 46.2-364. A "boat" is considered a

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60 vehicle and is defined as any vessel or other watercraft, privately owned, whether moved by oars, paddles,  
61 sails, or other power mechanism, inboard or outboard, or any other vessel or structure floating on water in  
62 the Commonwealth, whether or not capable of self-locomotion, including cruisers, cabin cruisers, runabouts,  
63 houseboats, and barges. However, bicycles, electric personal assistive mobility devices, electric power-  
64 assisted bicycles, motorized skateboards or scooters, and mopeds are not vehicles. A vehicle is considered to  
65 be unattended if (i) such vehicle is left unattended (a) on a public highway or other public property or (b) any  
66 parking area, lot, or structure intended for commercial or retail use, including such parking areas, lots, or  
67 structures exclusively reserved and used by commercial or retail employees, and (ii) the owner, operator, or  
68 any passenger of such motor vehicle is unable to observe such motor vehicle.

69 B. No person shall knowingly leave a handgun in an unattended vehicle or trunk unless such handgun is  
70 placed out of plain view in a locked hard-sided container, including a locked container that is affixed to the  
71 vehicle's interior by steel cable, bolt, or welding. A locked container affixed to the vehicle's interior includes  
72 a locked glove compartment or a locked center console. Any person who violates this section is guilty of a  
73 Class 4 misdemeanor.

74 C. The provisions of this section shall not apply to (i) the storage of any antique firearm as defined in  
75 § 18.2-308.2:2, (ii) a law-enforcement officer as defined in § 9.1-101, (iii) any motor vehicle parked in the  
76 parking structure on the west of the Capitol as referenced in subsection A of § 2.2-1172, or (iv) a person who  
77 reports the theft or loss of a firearm to a law-enforcement agency as provided in § 18.2-287.5.