

HCS HBs 643 & 641 -- FIREARMS

SPONSOR: Schnelting

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on General Laws by a vote of 12 to 1. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 6 to 2.

Currently, it is a crime to board a bus with a dangerous or deadly weapon or carry such a weapon in a terminal. Weapons may not be carried in any facility or on any conveyance used for a public transportation system of the Bi-State Development Agency. 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. A person with or without a permit may transport a firearm in a nonfunctioning state by bus if ammunition is not available. This bill does not apply to property of Amtrak or any partnership in which Amtrak engages.

This bill is similar to SB 39 (2019).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill helps guarantee the fundamental right to self defense and should have a statistically significant impact on violent crime. Disarming individuals in particular locations is unwise as this gives criminals a vulnerable target and police protection cannot ensure safety at all times.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Schnelting; William Bland, Western Missouri Shooters Alliance; Armon Reed-Wynne Sr; National Rifle Association; Carl Smart, Western Missouri Shooters Alliance; and Gregory C. Lowrimore.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that many bus riders and metro-link riders are going to locations where firearms are prohibited such as hospitals or government buildings and this could cause confusion and law violations. Accidental discharge of firearms and the possibility of theft or misuse of firearms is possible. The metro-link should have authority to regulate weapons under the interstate agreement with Illinois.

Testifying against the bill were Citizens for Modern Transit; State Council Service Employees International Union; Missouri Public Transit Association; Kansas City Area Transportation Authority; City Utilities of Springfield; and the Bi State Development Agency.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that Missouri lifetime

permits are not recognized and this could cause confusion. Standard language concerning the definition of terms such as "harassment" or "detention" might be employed to prevent accidentally narrowing the scope of firearm rights.

Testifying on the bill was Royce Barondes.