

HB 52 -- FIREARMS ON PUBLIC TRANSIT

SPONSOR: Schnelting

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on General Laws by a vote of 10 to 2. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 7 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. 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 non-functioning 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 the same as HB 51 (2020 1st Extraordinary).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill allows them to defend themselves on public transit, which is becoming increasingly dangerous. Current security measures on public transit are not enough, but now lawful concealed carriers can discourage criminal activity.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Schnelting; Mark Johnson; Rona Schaefer; Scott Jones, National Rifle Association; Carl Smart; Gregory C. Lowrimore; William W. Bland, Western Missouri Shooters Alliance; and Susan Myers.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that crime on public transit has been statistically declining. Transit agencies are also contracting with police and private security to rectify any safety concerns themselves. There is further concern that riders on public transit may not feel safe being surrounded by firearms carriers, so there may be a decline in use.

Testifying against the bill were Kansas City Area Transportation Authority; City of Kansas City, Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce; Missouri Public Transit Association; Greater St. Louis, Inc; City Utilities of Springfield; Missouri American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations; and Kendall Martínez-Wright.

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