WEST virginia legislature

2023 regular session

Introduced

Senate Bill 492

By Senators Chapman, Azinger, Deeds, Grady, Hamilton, Hunt, Maynard, Phillips, Rucker, Smith, Stuart, Tarr, Woodrum, Swope, Martin, Roberts, and Karnes

[Introduced January 27, 2023; referred  
 to the Committee on the Judiciary]

A BILL to amend and reenact §61-6-19 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to requiring legislators and staff who hold a current concealed carry permit to register with the Capitol Police an intent to carry concealed firearms within the Capitol buildings.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 6. CRIMES AGAINST THE PEACE.

§61-6-19. Willful disruption of governmental processes; offenses occurring at State Capitol Complex; penalties; concealed carry registration by legislators.

(a) If any person willfully interrupts or molests the orderly and peaceful process of any department, division, agency, or branch of state government or of its political subdivisions, he or she is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than $100, or confined in jail not more than six months, or both fined and confined: *Provided*, That any assembly in a peaceable, lawful, and orderly manner for a redress of grievances is not a violation of this section.

(b) (1) It is unlawful for any person to bring upon the State Capitol Complex any deadly weapon as defined in §61-7-2 of this code: *Provided*, That a person who may lawfully possess a firearm may keep a firearm in his or her motor vehicle upon the State Capitol Complex if the vehicle is locked and the weapon is out of normal view, except legislators and staff may carry concealed firearms if the provisions of subsection (c) are met: *Provided, however*, That a person may not carry upon the State Capitol Complex, a cannister of pepper spray as defined in §61-7-2 of this code that exceeds one ounce. It is unlawful for any person to willfully deface any trees, wall, floor, stairs, ceiling, column, statue, monument, structure, surface, artwork, or adornment in the State Capitol Complex. It is unlawful for any person or persons to willfully block or otherwise willfully obstruct any public access, stair, or elevator in the State Capitol Complex after being asked by a law-enforcement officer acting in his or her official capacity to desist: *Provided further,* That in order to preserve the constitutional right of the people to assemble, it is not willful blocking or willful obstruction for persons gathered in a group or crowd if the persons move to the side or part to allow other persons to pass by the group or crowd to gain ingress or egress: *And provided further*, That this subsection does not apply to a law-enforcement officer acting in his or her official capacity.

(2) Any person who violates this subsection is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less than $100, or confined in jail not more than six months, or both fined and confined.

(c) All legislators and staff who are current holders of a concealed carry permit in this state shall register with the Capitol Police and provide the Capitol Police with a signed letter of intent to carry concealed firearms inside the Capitol building. Once the signed letter of intent to carry is filed, legislators and staff may carry concealed firearms within the Capitol buildings.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to require legislators and staff who hold a current concealed carry permit to register with the Capitol Police an intent to carry concealed firearms within the Capitol buildings.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.