



Issue Spotlight: Protecting your Right to Self-Defense

The Florida House is committed to protecting your Constitutional right to self-defense. To do so, the House aims to empower our citizens by reforming Florida's Stand Your Ground procedure and clarifying laws surrounding concealed carry.

Below are the three bills the House is pursuing this year to further this position. Please refer to bill texts and analyses for more specific and complete information on each.

Stand Your Ground – CS/SB 128 (formerly CS/HB 245), Rep. Payne

- CS/SB 128 reforms the procedure for a Stand Your Ground immunity hearing.
- Florida's Stand Your Ground law has been the focal point for media misinformation and exaggeration. However, despite how it has been portrayed, the law simply allows for a pre-trial hearing for anyone who claims that he or she acted in self-defense. The purpose of the law is to support the constitutional right to self-defense and to allow individuals who act in self-defense to avoid the lengthy and costly burden of a full trial.
- Unfortunately, courts ruled that the burden of proof during the pre-trial Stand Your Ground hearing is on the person claiming they acted in self-defense. I believe this interpretation of the law has been destructive to its intent; individuals who claim they acted in self-defense under Stand Your Ground now have to essentially put forth the costly and time consuming case the law sought to avoid.
- CS/SB 128 follows the intent of the law and puts the burden on state, not accused, to prove by clear and convincing evidence the accused did not act in self-defense.
- **STATUS:** Passed House 04/05/17

Weapons and Firearms – CS/HB 779, Chairman Combee

- CS/HB 779 lowers the penalties for an unintentional and temporary open display of a concealed firearm.
- CS/HB 779 reduces the first-time penalty for the unintentional and temporary open display of a concealed firearm from a 3rd degree misdemeanor to a \$25 non-criminal citation. I do not think someone should be turned into a criminal because of an accidental display of their firearm.
- **STATUS:** Passed House 04/05/17



HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

Concealed Weapons and Firearms on Private School Property – CS/HB 849, Chairman Combee

- CS/HB 849 clarifies the laws surrounding concealed carry of firearms at religious institutions that are co-located on private school property.
- Under CS/HB 849, a person who is licensed to carry a concealed firearm will not be prohibited by law from carrying a concealed weapon or concealed firearm on private school property if a religious institution is located on the property. It will be up to the private property owner to determine whether to authorize or prohibit such carry on their property. I believe giving these property owners this right is an important step to take to protect the second amendment and help ensure safety within religious institutions.
- **STATUS:** Passed House 04/05/17