

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5123

AS OF JANUARY 31, 1991

Brief Description: Prohibiting firearms in a building used for judicial proceedings.

SPONSORS: Senators Newhouse, Rasmussen, A. Smith, Niemi, Wojahn, Talmadge, Gaspard and Erwin.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Staff: Jon Carlson (786-7459)

Hearing Dates: February 5, 1991

BACKGROUND:

The increase in threats to the physical safety of judges, court officers, litigants and other court participants has created a heightened level of concern regarding security in the courts. Although courts have been taking steps to increase courtroom security in a variety of areas, some court officials feel that further statutory restrictions on firearms in courthouse settings would provide an added measure of safety.

Current law provides that it is unlawful for any person to knowingly possess or control a firearm in a courtroom or judge's chamber while either is being used for any judicial proceeding. It is proposed that courtroom security would be increased by broadening the prohibition against firearms to include the entire courthouse and those areas in other buildings used for judicial proceedings.

SUMMARY:

A person may not knowingly possess or knowingly control a firearm in a building used regularly for judicial proceedings, or in those rooms that are being used for judicial proceedings in other buildings.

This prohibition does not apply to a judge or court employee, or to any person who has a concealed pistol license and has obtained written permission to possess the firearm from the court administrator.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested