



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on January 9, 2017

Proposed Florida Concealed-carry Bill Could Have Saved Lives

Five people were killed and six more suffered gunshot wounds on Friday at the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport when Esteban Santiago took out a gun he had checked from Anchorage, Alaska, loaded it in the baggage claim area's restroom, and began shooting.

When Florida State Representative Jake Raburn (R-Lithia) learned of Friday's shooting, [he told the Sun-Sentinel](#), "I do personally feel like had this bill been in place already, there could have been the potential for people to protect themselves in that situation."



Raburn was referring to a bill, HB 6001, that he filed on November 23 that would have allowed those carrying concealed to do so in any part of the airport terminal that is outside of a "secure" area protected by metal detectors.

Raburn told the [Miami Herald](#), "There's always the potential — if it were allowed and there were someone in that area that had a concealed weapon — that it could have gone differently. I'm not going to say that it would have, because my understanding is we're talking about a span of time that's less than a minute. It may not have changed anything. But had I been there waiting to pick up my family from the airport and had it happened near me, I would have been prepared to defend myself and my family."

State Senator Greg Steube (R-Sarasota) filed a similar bill (SB 140) on December 9, but his would also open up "gun free" zones currently in place at government meetings, schools, and colleges. Said Raburn: "While I have supported other bills that are rolled into Senator Steube's package, this was the one that was most important to me. I carry my weapon wherever I go, but I travel a lot and it's something I've thought about a lot as I have to comply with the law."

Steube's bill is currently before the Senate Judiciary committee, while Raburn's has not yet been assigned to a committee for review. Florida's legislative session starts in March, and the bills, if passed, would both go into effect July 1.

Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel is opposed Raburn's bill. He declared, "I'm opposed to it, just as I am opposed to open carry in schools. It makes us less safe, as it would hinder law enforcement by legally allowing potential active shooters to openly carry their deadly weapons right into airports to carry out their heinous attacks."

Sorry, Sherriff Israel. Raburn's bill applies to *concealed* carry, not open carry. The presence of firearms makes those locations more safe, not less (see John Lott's book [More Guns, Less Crime](#)). "Potential active shooters" already "carry their deadly weapons right into airports" (see [Fort Lauderdale shooting](#)). Weapons are only "deadly" when they are misused.



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Israel expanded on his misunderstanding: When you have a person [who] could be suffering from a severe mental illness, or you have what we call a lone wolf assassin ready to conduct some cowardly, heinous act, there's not much law enforcement or anybody else can do about it.

You're partially correct, Sheriff Israel: When seconds count, law enforcement is minutes away. The only possible defense against such a "lone wolf assassin" or someone "suffering from a severe mental illness" is a person who is already on the spot and is legally carrying concealed, trained in the defensive use of his firearm. Otherwise, Sheriff Israel, you and your people will only be conducting forensics following such "cowardly, heinous" acts.

It was predictable that another Florida representative, this time House member Debbie Wasserman Schultz, the disgraced former head of the DNC, would weigh in on the matter. An anti-Second Amendment politician, Schultz stated, "We need to take a hard look at the security around baggage claim areas.... There are many unsecure areas in facilities [where] the public travels ... so certainly those procedures need to be reviewed. I'm going to be addressing that when I go back to Washington."

Known as the Sunshine State for its relatively light touch on the right to keep and bear arms, Florida is way behind the curve when it comes to concealed carry in airports. Forty-four states allow lawful concealed carry of firearms in the common terminal and baggage claim areas of airports. Florida is one of just six states that puts the entire airport terminal off limits to firearms, making it one of the most restrictive states in the country in that regard.

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