



Missouri Legislature Overrides Governor's Veto of Pro-gun Bill

During a special session called by the Missouri legislature specifically to consider Governor Ray Nixon's veto of Senate Bill 656, lawmakers [voted to override his veto](#) on Wednesday. The new law will considerably expand Second Amendment rights for citizens of the state.

It prevents local municipalities from passing laws that ban open carry. In essence, the new law now makes open carry legal throughout Missouri.



SB 656 also lowers the age to obtain a concealed carry permit from 21 to 19. And it prohibits law-enforcement officers from detaining or disarming citizens unless there is "reasonable and articulable suspicion of criminal activity." Put simply, there will be no New York City-style "stop and frisk" incidents in the Show-Me State.

It also bars healthcare professionals from asking their patients whether "he or she owns or has access to a firearm," and from documenting that information in their patients' medical records or notifying "any governmental entity of the identity of a patient based solely on the patient's status as a firearms owner or the patient's access to a firearm."

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Finally, it allows specially trained school employees to carry guns while at work in order to protect students from violent crime.

It was this last provision that provoked most of the governor's ire when he vetoed the bill back in July, insisting:

Arming teachers will not make our schools safer. I have supported and will continue to support the use of duly authorized law enforcement officers employed as school resource officers, but I cannot condone putting firearms in the hands of educators who would be focused on teaching our kids.

The governor's statement was obviously crafted for public consumption, as it had little to do with the actual language in the bill that he vetoed.

The new legislation specifically states,

This act allows a school district to designate one or more school teachers or administrators as a school protection officer. School protection officers are authorized to carry a concealed firearm or self-defense spray device.

This act requires a school board that is seeking to designate a school protection officer to hold a public hearing on the matter.... Those seeking to be designated as school protection officers must make a request in writing to the superintendent of the school district along with proof of ownership of a valid concealed carry ... permit, and a certificate of completion of a school protection officer



training program.

In other words, the new law merely allows school districts to exercise, for the first time, common sense regarding the arming of teachers or administrators. It does not mandate that every teacher and administrator carry a gun.

This override of the governor's veto evens the score somewhat, as the same legislature fell one vote short of overriding the governor's veto of another pro-gun bill just a year ago — HB 436, the Second Amendment Preservation Act — that would have denied the federal government the authority to enact any statutes, rules, regulations, or executive orders “which restrict or prohibit the manufacture, ownership, and use of firearms, firearm accessories, or ammunition exclusively within the borders of Missouri.”

Now that school boards are allowed to use common sense in determining whether school protection officers should be provided, it is hoped that they would refer to the words penned by Thomas Paine in his pamphlet *Common Sense* written in 1775-76:

The peaceable part of mankind will be continually overrun by the vile and abandoned while they neglect the means of self-defense. The supposed quietude of a good man allures the ruffian; while on the other hand arms, like laws, discourage and keep the invader and plunderer in awe and preserve order in the world.

All would be wonderful if evil men would disarm, but since some will not, others dare not lay them aside. Horrid mischief would ensue: the weak would become prey to the strong.

In his examination of the policy of “gun free zones,” Brian Kern, a professor at the University of North Texas, concluded that despite such common sense as expressed by Paine, “the basic fact [is] that some governmental agencies, schools, and private businesses actively deny a law-abiding citizen's right to self-protection without assuming the responsibility themselves. As the lawsuits against universities such as Virginia Tech [following the massacre there in 2007] cost taxpayers and educational facilities millions of dollars, we are forced to wonder why any university or business would want to declare their establishment ‘gun free.’”

The Show-Me State got its sobriquet from a speech given by a former state congressman, Willard Duncan Vandiver, who declared in 1899:

I come from a state that raises corn and cotton and cockle burrs and Democrats, and frothy eloquence neither convinces nor satisfies me. I am from Missouri. You have got to show me.

On Wednesday, to its credit, the legislature of the state of Missouri showed the state's Democrat governor more than a modicum of common sense in overriding his veto of this sensible bill.

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