



TEXAS HOUSE *of* REPRESENTATIVES

James White

*House District 19
Jasper, Newton, Hardin, Polk, Tyler*

CORRECTIONS
CHAIR

REDISTRICTING

JUDICIARY &
CIVIL JURISPRUDENCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Texas House Passes Reforms Investing in TRS and Strengthening the 2nd Amendment - Weekly Legislative Update 4/26/19 -

(Austin, TX) - I joined my colleagues in the Texas House of Representatives to pass legislation that invests in retired teachers by increasing the state's contributions to the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS).

The House's version of Senate Bill 12 funds a 13th check for retired teachers, makes the pension fund more stable and solvent, and incrementally increases the state's contributions to the fund over a five-year period.

I am proud to have co-authored House Bill 9, the House's companion bill for SB 12. Thanks to the overwhelming support of the Texas House, we have taken action to bolster the future retirement of our Texas teachers. Texas educators dedicate their careers to improving the lives of our Texas children and strengthening the future economic prosperity of our state. As we work to make investments to meet the needs of our classrooms, we must also work to meet the needs of our retired teachers.

The TRS currently provides retirement benefits to more than 420,000 individuals and requires an increased investment from the state to assure the fund remains financially healthy. The state is prohibited from issuing a cost-of-living increase or supplemental payment to retired teachers until the fund is deemed actuarially sound. This legislation would address that requirement.

In recent sessions, Texas House Republicans have protected Texans' right to bear arms, including passing measures allowing the licensed open carry of handguns, allowing Concealed Handgun License holders to possess their guns on college campuses, and reducing the handgun license application and renewal fees. This session, several measures are advancing to protect law-abiding Texas gun owners.

House Bill 121:

- By and large, Texas gun license holders are law-abiding individuals who simply want to carry their personal handgun, but also understand that some businesses do not allow guns on their property.



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- HB 121 would ensure that law-abiding handgun license holders are not penalized for accidentally carrying their handgun where it is not allowed.
- Currently, an individual could enter a business and inadvertently walk by or simply not see a sign stating that handguns are prohibited and, despite wanting to abide by the property owner's choice to ban guns, could be violating the law.
- The bill would recognize the innocent mistake made by a handgun license holder and would allow them to use a defense to prosecution, so they are not convicted of a class C misdemeanor. The applicability of the bill is narrow enough to make sure individuals who ignore the law are punished because they would have to promptly leave a property after receiving notice.

House Bill 302:

- Law-abiding Texans who choose to carry handguns on property they control and move with them from their vehicles to that property should not be convicted of a punishable offense such as trespassing. HB 302 clears up confusion related to the right of individuals to carry guns at their apartment or condominium complex.
- HB 302 protects the rights of owners and tenants of residential units to lawfully possess firearms and ammunition in their apartments or condominiums, and to transport them between their vehicles and their residential unit.
- Currently, a landlord may post a sign or provide a tenant with lease terms that prohibit firearms at an apartment or condominium complex. Prohibitions of this nature are confusing for tenants because they would effectively prohibit individuals who lawfully carry from moving their handguns between vehicles and their apartments or condos.

House Bill 516:

- Current law is unclear about whether liability applies to property owners who allow open or concealed carry of handguns on their property. Property owners who exercise their support of the 2nd Amendment on their property deserve protection from causes of action.
- HB 516 provides immunity to property or business owners who allow the carrying of handguns by a license holder on the property and do not post 30.06 or 30.07 signs stating their premises are off-limits to the carrying of handguns.

House Bill 1177:



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- Texans should be able to legally transport their lawfully-owned handguns if they are evacuating by means other than their personal vehicles or their own watercraft during a mandatory evacuation order. To require citizens to leave their firearms behind during an emergency reduces their ability to protect their families, instills a fear of breaking the law, and potentially allows looters to steal their handguns.
- HB 1177 protects citizens from being charged with a crime for carrying a handgun while evacuating from or returning to an area subject to a mandatory order issued during a declared state or local disaster.
- The bill offers a temporary protection to honest Texans whose Licenses to Carry is lost or damaged due to flood, wind, or fire, and to those who don't have a license because they never envisioned a need to transport or carry their handguns outside the home.

House Bill 2137:

- Our peace officers understand the importance of responsible, law-abiding gun ownership. Texas is honoring their sacrifice and their expertise in this area by passing HB 2137.
- HB 2137 exempts an honorably retired peace officer from completing the classroom instruction portion of the required handgun proficiency course if the officer complies with certain requirements and holds a current certificate of proficiency to obtain a license to carry a handgun.
- The bill also requires the Texas Department of Public Safety to waive the License to Carry application fee for honorably retired peace officers.

House Bills 121, 302, 1177, and 2137 have passed the House of Representatives and are now being considered in the Senate. House Bill 516 has been voted out of the House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence and is now on its way to the House floor.

The Capitol of Texas belongs to you and visiting the Capitol during the biennial legislative session is a great experience. To assist in arranging your visit please call Saul Mendoza, my Chief of Staff, at (512) 463-0490. Or, you can email him at saul.mendoza@house.texas.gov.

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