

Submitter: Chelsea Bearden

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB698

I am strongly opposed to SB 698 because it undermines the rights of law-abiding concealed handgun license holders and creates a dangerous patchwork of firearm regulations that can confuse citizens and criminalize responsible gun ownership.

This bill would authorize local governing bodies to limit the affirmative defense for concealed handgun licensees in public buildings—a move that chips away at state-level protections and introduces inconsistencies across jurisdictions. Law-abiding citizens who have gone through background checks, training, and obtained licenses in good faith could suddenly find themselves facing criminal charges simply for entering a public building with a legally carried firearm.

SB 698 does not enhance public safety—it only creates ambiguity and legal risk for those already following the law. Moreover, by allowing local entities to impose arbitrary restrictions, it invites selective enforcement and erodes Second Amendment rights under the guise of local control.

If the goal is to keep public spaces safe, we should focus on targeting illegal gun use and strengthening mental health resources, not penalizing responsible citizens. I urge lawmakers to reject SB 698 and preserve the integrity of our concealed carry laws.