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SENATE BILL NO. 274

Offered January 19, 1998

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 18.2-308 of the Code of Virginia, relating to concealed weapons; permits.*

Patron—Reasor

Referred to the Committee for Courts of Justice

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 18.2-308 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 18.2-308. Personal protection; carrying concealed weapons; when lawful to carry.

A. If any person carries about his person, hidden from common observation, (i) any pistol, revolver, or other weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind; (ii) any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, razor, slingshot, spring stick, metal knucks, or blackjack; (iii) any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain; (iv) any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart; or (v) any weapon of like kind as those enumerated in this subsection, he shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. A second violation of this section or a conviction under this section subsequent to any conviction under any substantially similar ordinance of any county, city, or town shall be punishable as a Class 6 felony, and a third or subsequent such violation shall be punishable as a Class 5 felony. Any weapon used in the commission of a violation of this section shall be forfeited to the Commonwealth and may be seized by an officer as forfeited, and such as may be needed for police officers, conservators of the peace, and the Division of Forensic Science shall be devoted to that purpose, subject to any registration requirements of federal law, and the remainder shall be disposed of as provided in § 18.2-310. For the purpose of this section, a weapon shall be deemed to be hidden from common observation when it is observable but is of such deceptive appearance as to disguise the weapon's true nature.

B. This section shall not apply to:

1. Any person while in his own place of abode or the curtilage thereof;
2. Any police officers, including Capitol Police officers, sergeants, sheriffs, deputy sheriffs or regular game wardens appointed pursuant to Chapter 2 (§ 29.1-200 et seq.) of Title 29.1;
3. Any regularly enrolled member of a target shooting organization who is at, or going to or from, an established shooting range, provided that the weapons are unloaded and securely wrapped while being transported;
4. Any regularly enrolled member of a weapons collecting organization who is at, or going to or from, a bona fide weapons exhibition, provided that the weapons are unloaded and securely wrapped while being transported;
5. Any person carrying such weapons between his place of abode and a place of purchase or repair, provided the weapons are unloaded and securely wrapped while being transported;
6. Campus police officers appointed pursuant to Chapter 17 (§ 23-232 et seq.) of Title 23;
7. Any person actually engaged in lawful hunting, as authorized by the Board of Game and Inland Fisheries, under inclement weather conditions necessitating temporary protection of his firearm from those conditions; and

8. Any State Police officer retired from the Department of State Police and any local law-enforcement officer retired from a police department or sheriff's office within the Commonwealth (i) with a service-related disability or (ii) following at least fifteen years of service, other than a person terminated for cause, provided such officer carries with him written proof of consultation with and favorable review of the need to carry a concealed weapon issued by the chief law-enforcement officer of the agency from which the officer retired.

C. This section shall also not apply to any of the following individuals while in the discharge of their official duties, or while in transit to or from such duties:

1. Carriers of the United States mail;
2. Officers or guards of any state correctional institution;
3. [Repealed.]

4. Conservators of the peace, except that the following conservators of the peace shall not be permitted to carry a concealed weapon without obtaining a permit as provided in subsection D hereof:

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60 (a) notaries public; (b) registrars; (c) drivers, operators or other persons in charge of any motor vehicle
61 carrier of passengers for hire; or (d) commissioners in chancery;

62 5. Noncustodial employees of the Department of Corrections designated to carry weapons by the
63 Director of the Department of Corrections pursuant to § 53.1-29;

64 6. Law-enforcement agents of the Armed Forces of the United States and federal agents who are
65 otherwise authorized to carry weapons by federal law while engaged in the performance of their duties;

66 7. Law-enforcement agents of the United States Naval Criminal Investigative Service; and

67 8. Harbormaster of the City of Hopewell.

68 D. Any person twenty-one years of age or older may apply in writing to the clerk of the circuit court
69 of the county or city in which he resides for a five-year permit to carry a concealed handgun.
70 Notwithstanding § 15.1-29.15, a county or city may enact an ordinance which requires any applicant for
71 a concealed handgun permit to submit to fingerprinting for the purpose of obtaining the applicant's state
72 or national criminal history record. The application shall be made under oath before a notary or other
73 person qualified to take oaths and shall be made only on a form prescribed by the Department of State
74 Police, in consultation with the Supreme Court, requiring only that information necessary to determine
75 eligibility for the permit. The court shall consult with the law-enforcement authorities of the county or
76 city and receive a report from the Central Criminal Records Exchange. As a condition for issuance of a
77 concealed handgun permit, the applicant shall submit to fingerprinting if required by local ordinance in
78 the county or city where the applicant resides and provide personal descriptive information to be
79 forwarded with the fingerprints through the Central Criminal Records Exchange to the Federal Bureau of
80 Investigation for the purpose of obtaining criminal history record information regarding the applicant,
81 and obtaining fingerprint identification information from federal records pursuant to criminal
82 investigations by state and local law-enforcement agencies. Upon completion of the criminal history
83 records check, the State Police shall return the fingerprint cards to the submitting local agency. The
84 local agency shall then promptly notify the person that he has twenty-one days from the date of the
85 notice to request return of the fingerprint cards. All fingerprint cards not claimed by the applicant within
86 twenty-one days of notification by the local agency shall be destroyed. Fingerprints taken for the
87 purposes described in this section shall not be copied, held or used for any other purposes. The court
88 shall issue the permit within forty-five days of receipt of the completed application unless it is
89 determined that the applicant is disqualified. If the applicant is later found by the court to be
90 disqualified, the permit shall be revoked.

91 E. The following persons shall be deemed disqualified from obtaining a permit:

92 1. An individual who is ineligible to possess a firearm pursuant to §§ 18.2-308.1:1, 18.2-308.1:2 or
93 § 18.2-308.1:3 or the substantially similar law of any other state or of the United States.

94 2. An individual who was ineligible to possess a firearm pursuant to § 18.2-308.1:1 and who was
95 discharged from the custody of the Commissioner pursuant to § 19.2-182.7 less than five years before
96 the date of his application for a concealed handgun permit.

97 3. An individual who was ineligible to possess a firearm pursuant to § 18.2-308.1:2 and whose
98 competency or capacity was restored pursuant to former § 37.1-134.1 or § 37.1-134.16 less than five
99 years before the date of his application for a concealed handgun permit.

100 4. An individual who was ineligible to possess a firearm under § 18.2-308.1:3 and who was released
101 from commitment less than five years before the date of this application for a concealed handgun
102 permit.

103 5. An individual who is subject to a restraining order, or to a protective order and prohibited by
104 § 18.2-308.1:4 from purchasing or transporting a firearm.

105 6. An individual who is prohibited by § 18.2-308.2 from possessing or transporting a firearm, except
106 that a permit may be obtained in accordance with subsection C of that section.

107 7. An individual who has been convicted of two or more misdemeanors within the five-year period
108 immediately preceding the application, if one of the misdemeanors was a Class 1 misdemeanor, but the
109 judge shall have the discretion to deny a permit for two or more misdemeanors that are not Class 1.
110 Traffic infractions or reckless driving shall not be considered for purposes of this disqualification.

111 8. An individual who is addicted to, or is an unlawful user or distributor of, marijuana or any
112 controlled substance.

113 9. An individual who has been convicted of a violation of § 18.2-266 or a substantially similar local
114 ordinance or of public drunkenness within the three-year period immediately preceding the application,
115 or who is a habitual drunkard as determined pursuant to § 4.1-333.

116 10. An alien other than an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States.

117 11. An individual who has been discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States under
118 dishonorable conditions.

119 12. An individual who is a fugitive from justice.

120 13. An individual who it is alleged, in a sworn written statement submitted to the court by the
121 sheriff, chief of police or attorney for the Commonwealth in the opinion of such sheriff, chief of police

or attorney for the Commonwealth, is likely to use a weapon unlawfully or negligently to endanger others. The statement of the sheriff, chief of police or the attorney for the Commonwealth shall be based upon personal knowledge or upon the sworn written statement of a competent person having personal knowledge.

14. An individual who has been convicted of any assault, assault and battery, sexual battery, discharging of a firearm in violation of § 18.2-280 or § 18.2-286.1 or brandishing of a firearm in violation of § 18.2-282 within the three-year period immediately preceding the application.

15. An individual who has been convicted of stalking.

16. An individual whose previous convictions or adjudications of delinquency were based on an offense which would have been at the time of conviction a felony if committed by an adult under the laws of any state, the District of Columbia, the United States or its territories. For purposes of this disqualifier, only convictions occurring within sixteen years following the later of the date of (i) the conviction or adjudication or (ii) release from any incarceration imposed upon such conviction or adjudication shall be deemed to be "previous convictions."

17. An individual who has a felony charge pending or a charge pending for an offense listed in subdivision 14 or 15.

18. An individual who has received mental health treatment or substance abuse treatment in a residential setting within five years prior to the date of his application for a concealed handgun permit.

F. The making of a materially false statement in an application under this section shall constitute perjury, punishable as provided in § 18.2-434.

G. The court may further require proof that the applicant has demonstrated competence with a handgun and the applicant may demonstrate such competence by one of the following:

1. Completing any hunter education or hunter safety course approved by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries or a similar agency of another state;

2. Completing any National Rifle Association firearms safety or training course;

3. Completing any firearms safety or training course or class available to the general public offered by a law-enforcement agency, junior college, college, or private or public institution or organization or firearms training school utilizing instructors certified by the National Rifle Association or the Department of Criminal Justice Services;

4. Completing any law-enforcement firearms safety or training course or class offered for security guards, investigators, special deputies, or any division or subdivision of law enforcement or security enforcement;

5. Presenting evidence of equivalent experience with a firearm through participation in organized shooting competition or military service;

6. Obtaining or previously having held a license to carry a firearm in this Commonwealth or a locality thereof, unless such license has been revoked for cause;

7. Completing any firearms training or safety course or class conducted by a state-certified or National Rifle Association-certified firearms instructor; or

8. Completing any other firearms training which the court deems adequate.

A photocopy of a certificate of completion of any of the courses or classes; an affidavit from the instructor, school, club, organization, or group that conducted or taught such course or class attesting to the completion of the course or class by the applicant; or a copy of any document which shows completion of the course or class or evidences participation in firearms competition shall constitute evidence of qualification under this subsection.

H. The permit to carry a concealed handgun shall specify the name, address, date of birth, gender, social security number, height, weight, color of hair, color of eyes, and signature of the permittee; the signature of the judge issuing the permit, or of the clerk of court who has been authorized to sign such permits by the issuing judge; the date of issuance; and the expiration date. The person issued the permit shall have such permit on his person at all times during which he is carrying a concealed handgun and must display the permit and a photo-identification issued by a government agency of the Commonwealth or by the United States Department of Defense or United States State Department (passport) upon demand by a law-enforcement officer.

I. Persons who previously have held a concealed weapons permit shall be issued, upon application as provided in subsection D made prior to expiration of an existing permit, a new five-year permit. A person who applies for renewal after expiration of an existing permit shall apply therefor as provided in subsection D and the application shall be treated as if it were an initial application under this section.

If the circuit court denies the permit, the specific reasons for the denial shall be stated in the order of the court denying the permit. Upon denial of the application and request of the applicant made within ten days, the court shall place the matter on the docket for an ore tenus hearing. The applicant may be represented by counsel, but counsel shall not be appointed. The final order of the court shall include the court's findings of fact and conclusions of law.

183 J. Any person convicted of an offense that would disqualify that person from obtaining a permit
184 under subsection E or who violates subsection F shall forfeit his permit for a concealed handgun to the
185 court. Upon receipt by the Central Criminal Records Exchange of a record of the arrest, conviction or
186 occurrence of any other event which would disqualify a person from obtaining a concealed weapons
187 permit under subsection E, the Central Criminal Records Exchange shall notify the court having issued
188 the permit of such disqualifying arrest, conviction or other event.

189 J1. Any person permitted to carry a concealed weapon under this section, who is under the influence
190 of alcohol or illegal drugs while carrying such weapon in a public place, shall be guilty of a Class 1
191 misdemeanor.

192 J2. An individual who has a felony charge pending or a charge pending for an offense listed in
193 subdivision E 14 or E 15, holding a permit for a concealed handgun, may have the permit suspended by
194 the court before which such charge is pending.

195 J3. No person shall carry a concealed handgun onto the premises of any restaurant or club as defined
196 in § 4.1-100 for which a license to sell and serve alcoholic beverages for on-premises consumption has
197 been granted by the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Board under Title 4.1 of the Code of Virginia;
198 however, nothing herein shall prohibit any owner or event sponsor or his employees from carrying a
199 concealed handgun while on duty at such restaurant or club if such person has a concealed handgun
200 permit.

201 K. No fee shall be charged for the issuance of such permit to a person who has retired from service
202 (i) as a magistrate in the Commonwealth; (ii) as a law-enforcement officer with the Department of State
203 Police or with a sheriff or police department, bureau or force of any political subdivision of the
204 Commonwealth of Virginia, after completing twenty years' service or after reaching age fifty-five; or
205 (iii) to any person who has retired after completing twenty years' service or after reaching age fifty-five
206 from service as a law-enforcement officer with the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation,
207 Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Secret Service Agency, Drug Enforcement Administration or
208 Naval Criminal Investigative Service. The clerk shall charge a fee of ten dollars for the processing of an
209 application or issuing of a permit, including his costs associated with the consultation with
210 law-enforcement agencies. The local law-enforcement agency conducting the background investigation
211 may charge a fee not to exceed thirty-five dollars to cover the cost of conducting an investigation
212 pursuant to this section. The thirty-five-dollar fee shall include any amount assessed by the Federal
213 Bureau of Investigation for providing criminal history record information, and the local law-enforcement
214 agency shall forward the amount assessed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation to the State Police
215 with the fingerprints taken from the applicant. The State Police may charge a fee not to exceed five
216 dollars to cover their costs associated with processing the application. The total amount assessed for
217 processing an application for a permit shall not exceed fifty dollars, with such fees to be paid in one
218 sum to the person who accepts the application. Payment may be made by any method accepted by that
219 court for payment of other fees or penalties. No payment shall be required until the application is
220 accepted by the court as a complete application. The order issuing such permit shall be provided to the
221 State Police and the law-enforcement agencies of the county or city. The State Police shall enter the
222 permittee's name and description in the Virginia Criminal Information Network so that the permit's
223 existence and current status will be made known to law-enforcement personnel accessing the Network
224 for investigative purposes.

225 L. Any person denied a permit to carry a concealed weapon under the provisions of this section may,
226 within thirty days of the final decision, present a petition for review to the Court of Appeals or any
227 judge thereof. The petition shall be accompanied by a copy of the original papers filed in the circuit
228 court, including a copy of the order of the circuit court denying the permit. Subject to the provisions of
229 § 17-116.07 B, the decision of the Court of Appeals or judge shall be final. Notwithstanding any other
230 provision of law, if the decision to deny the permit is reversed upon appeal, taxable costs incurred by
231 the person shall be paid by the Commonwealth.

232 M. For purposes of this section:

233 "Handgun" means any pistol or revolver or other firearm, except a machine gun, originally designed,
234 made and intended to fire a projectile by means of an explosion from one or more barrels when held in
235 one hand.

236 "Lawfully admitted for permanent residence" means the status of having been lawfully accorded the
237 privilege of residing permanently in the United States as an immigrant in accordance with the
238 immigration laws, such status not having changed.

239 N. As used in this article:

240 "Spring stick" means a spring-loaded metal stick activated by pushing a button which rapidly and
241 forcefully telescopes the weapon to several times its original length.

242 "Ballistic knife" means any knife with a detachable blade that is propelled by a spring-operated
243 mechanism.

244 O. The granting of a concealed handgun permit shall not thereby authorize the possession of any

handgun or other weapon on property or in places where such possession is otherwise prohibited by law or is prohibited by the owner of private property.

P. A valid concealed handgun permit or license issued by another state shall be valid in the Commonwealth, provided (i) the issuing authority provides the means for instantaneous verification of the validity of all such permits or licenses issued within that state, accessible twenty-four hours a day, (ii) the requirements and qualifications of that state's law are substantially similar to or exceed the provisions of this section, and (iii) a state meeting the requirements and qualifications of this section grants the same privilege to residents of the Commonwealth who have valid concealed handgun permits in their possession while carrying concealed weapons in that state. The Superintendent of State Police shall (a) in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General determine which states meet the requirements and qualifications of this section, (b) maintain a registry of such states on the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN), and (c) make the registry available to law-enforcement officers for investigative purposes.

Q. The provisions of this statute or the application thereof to any person or circumstances which are held invalid shall not affect the validity of other provisions or applications of this statute which can be given effect without the invalid provisions or applications. This subsection is to reiterate § 1-17.1 and is not meant to add or delete from that provision.