

GrassRoots GunRights

P.O. Box 2446
Lexington, SC 29071

February 16, 2010

The Honorable Bruce W. Bannister,
SC House of Representatives
Post Office Box 11867
Columbia, SC 29211

RE: H. 3994

Dear Representative Bannister,

GrassRoots GunRights strongly supports H. 3994. As more and more businesses provide the only available parking on site and as public parking disappears, it is critically important that the right to keep and bear arms in private vehicles be protected in a real world practical manner.

Currently, some employers ban firearms in private vehicles on company property. Gun-owning employees must then travel to and from work without an effective means of self-defense. The employer essentially strips gun-owning employees of the right of self-defense during the entire commute without assuming any responsibility if the employee is attacked. This is wrong.

A legal benefit to businesses and property owners is that since the law will deny them the power to prohibit firearms in vehicles, they cannot be held legally liable for the misuse of firearms pulled from a vehicle. This will deny an attorney the option of trying to hold businesses and property owners liable for the misuse of firearms pulled from a vehicle on the property.

Unfortunately, H. 3994 is poorly drafted and needs to be amended. How does one enter or exit a locked vehicle? To ensure the intent of the law is also the language of the law, the bill needs to be amended to read "a locked or attended vehicle" as was done in S. 593 (Act 0032 of 2009), not just a "locked vehicle." Then, a person will be able to legally enter and exit his vehicle.

Some might argue there is no need for such a change because common sense would dictate that a person must be allowed to enter and exit the vehicle. But, common sense is all too often in short supply. GrassRoots heard from people who were charged with illegal possession of a handgun for having a handgun in an open glove box when the glove box was only opened to get the vehicle's registration and proof of insurance while in the presence of a law enforcement officer. Common sense would say this should never have happened. But, it did. Thus, GrassRoots successfully pushed to get the law changed in 2004 (Act 294 of 2004) to specifically allow the glove box to be open when retrieving such documents in the presence of a law enforcement

officer. Legislators need to spare gun owners the expense of defending themselves later over language that could and should be changed now so as to make clear the intent of the legislature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William W. Rentiers III". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end.

William W. Rentiers III
Executive Officer
GrassRoots GunRights