

GrassRoots GunRights

P.O. Box 2446
Lexington, SC 29071

April 15, 2009

The Honorable John M. "Jake" Knotts, Jr.
South Carolina Senate
Post Office Box 142
Columbia, SC 29202

Re: S.593 - a limited exception to Section 16-23-430

Dear Senator Knotts:

There are currently 78,000 concealed weapon permit (CWP) holders in South Carolina. One of the top concerns for CWP holders are the South Carolina laws making it a felony to possess a firearm anywhere on school or college property, even though federal law allows a SC CWP holder to actually carry in a school. The SC laws making it a felony for a parent who is an armed CWP holder to drop off or pick up her child from school or college need to be changed.

S. 593 is a poorly drafted attempt at allowing a parent with a CWP to legally drop off or pick up her child from school or college. Unfortunately, S. 593 is so poorly drafted that it could easily lead to legislative entrapment of innocent CWP holders. But, S. 593 can easily be fixed.

Both Section 16-23-420 and Section 16-23-430 make it a felony to possess a firearm on school grounds. S. 593 amends Section 16-23-430 to allow a CWP holder to possess a concealed weapon on school grounds, and only if the weapon remains inside an attended or locked vehicle. So, if S. 593 were enacted into law as currently drafted, Section 16-23-420 would continue to make it a felony to do what the amended Section 16-23-430 would allow. The resulting conflict between Section 16-23-420 and Section 16-23-430 is an example of legislative entrapment that would create serious problems for innocent CWP holders.

S. 593 needs to be amended so that both Section 16-23-430 and Section 16-23-420 allow CWP holders to possess a concealed weapon inside of an attended or locked vehicle on school grounds. Please use the language from S. 593 that is being added to Section 16-23-430 and add it to Section 16-23-420, too.

If S. 593 is amended as proposed above and enacted into law, CWP holders who receive a call at work telling them they have a sick child at school will no longer be forced to first return home to store their self defense side arm prior to going to pick up their sick child from school. This legislation will stop CWP holders from being forced to travel long distances without the means to protect their families when dropping off and picking up their children from colleges across the state, which is frequently done during the hours of darkness. This legislation will allow female

CWP holders who attend night school to possess the means to protect themselves when traveling to and from school and work on the days when they attend school.

GrassRoots GunRights urges you to amend S. 593 as described above and to pass S. 593.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R.D. Butler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent horizontal line across the top of the name.

Robert D. Butler, JD
VP, GrassRoots GunRights SC