

# GOP lawmakers propose 'Right to Carry' concealed weapons

Posted on Tuesday, Mar 28, 2017

GOP Sen. Dave Craig and Rep. Mary Felzkowski are proposing legislation that would allow Wisconsin residents to carry a concealed weapon without first obtaining a permit.

It also would eliminate the state's school gun free zone law, though schools could still post signs on their buildings and grounds banning weapons. There's also a federal gun free zone law.

Felzkowski, R-Irma, pointed out open carry is already legal in Wisconsin without a permit. But those exercising that right suddenly break the law simply by putting a jacket or sweatshirt on that covers up the holstered gun on their hip.

"I can wear a coat now," Felzkowski said of the difference between what she and Craig call the "Right to Carry Act" and current standards for open carry.

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The bill, which the two are now circulating for co-sponsorships, would still retain the current concealed carry permit lawmakers approved in 2011, which ensures holders can carry in other states with reciprocity provisions in their laws.

They also are proposing a new "basic" concealed carry permit that would not include a training requirement, though DOJ would have to perform a background check on applicants.

Under current law, those who have a concealed carry permit are not subject to the federal gun free school zone laws or the general state prohibition against possessing a firearm within 1,000 feet of the grounds of a school, according to a memo from Legislative Council the co-authors distributed.

The “basic” permit would meet the requirements to be exempt from the federal gun free school zone laws.

If schools chose to ban firearms on their property, under the bill, the prohibition would generally not apply to a firearm kept in a vehicle, according to the memo.

Craig said he has no commitment from Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, on the bill, though he expects “robust” co-sponsorship in that chamber. Felzkowski said Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, told her she needed to build support for the bill and he wanted to make sure schools and universities still had the option to ban guns in their buildings.

According to the bill analysis, other provisions include:

- \*eliminating the general prohibition against carrying a firearm in buildings such as a police station, house of correction or secure mental health facility, though they could post notice prohibiting the carrying of a firearm.

- \*eliminating the prohibition on shining wildlife while in possession of a firearm, bow and arrow, or crossbow, though the ban on shining while hunting would remain.

- \*allowing DOJ to issue a permit to an applicant who is not a Wisconsin resident. Felzkowski said that was designed to allow those who, for example, spent most of their time in Wisconsin but are Florida residents.

- \*eliminating the ban on carrying tasers except for those who are prohibited from possessing a firearm.

- \*changing the definition of a firearm to exclude antiques, which were manufactured before 1898, and muzzleloaders. Felzkowski said the change would allow those, for example, who were convicted of a felony to still be able to hunt with a muzzleloader.