

Date: 1-26-21

## **House Floor**

### **Bill: HB 60 Conceal Carry Firearms Amendments**

Sponsor: Rep. Brooks

Floor Sponsor: Sen. Hinkins

### **UASD Position: Tracking with Concern**

This Bill: modifies provisions related to carrying a concealed firearm and suicide prevention.

Discussion: Rep. Brooks said he holds a conceal carry permit and carries often. But does the permit actually increase safety? He explained that 19 states allow permitless carry. None of them have an increase in gun violence or gun incidents. Rep. Brooks said that making someone get a permit doesn't resolve the issues around gun violence. In Kansas, they got rid of the requirement for a permit. Permits went down, but class attendance went up. He shared data suggesting that removing the permit doesn't increase crime or accidents. Rep. Nelson said he cannot see any problem that this bill solves. He was told that if he votes against this bill, he will be targeted by the NRA. He is pro-second amendment and loves guns. He contended that good public policy is defined by the Constitution and public safety. Under the Constitution, any citizen can carry a gun openly without a permit. There is no constitutional right to carry a concealed weapon without a permit. Rep. Nelson then said that proponents of the bill would say bad actors will ignore the permit requirement. But if that's true, then what about all the other license requirements and other criminal laws? Law on our books establishes standards for society and deters bad behavior. He argued that the statistics indicating there is no increase in crime in other states don't account for bad actors who carry concealed weapons. He concluded by saying that removing the permit requirement makes society less safe.

Rep. Eliason moved to substitute. He said this bill comes up every session, and over time he has become less concerned about the risk of increasing crime. However, he is concerned about suicide by firearm. He referenced a study showing that 86% of firearm deaths in Utah are suicides, and several other statistics on suicide and firearms. Several years ago they passed a bill that required a short video about the risk between firearms and suicide to be added to the conceal carry classes. He explained that this substitute fixes a faulty reference and states that excess funds in the conceal carry arm permit fund will go to educate the public about the risks between suicide and firearms. Rep. Brooks said this is a friendly amendment. He said the Utah Sheriff's Association supports this bill and that he worked with law enforcement on the bill. Rep.

Robertson asked how much money there is in the account that would be rolled over for this purpose. Rep. Eliason said he doesn't know the exact number, but that they usually collect just enough to cover the costs of the program. Rep. King spoke in support of the substitute. The substitute passed. Rep. Waldron asked what instruction is required to obtain a conceal carry permit. Rep. Brooks said it's a 4 hour class where they teach you about gun laws and you watch the video. There is no hands-on training required. Rep. Maloy said he supports the bill. He asked why open carry is so important, and said conceal carry provides better protection and a better sense of security. Rep. Moss spoke against the bill. She said her constituents are opposed to this because they perceive it as opening the door to many more people carrying guns without proper training. She said she trusts the people here with conceal carry permits, but that not everyone carrying a gun is a good guy. Many people who were insurrectionists and went to the capitol would be considered to be good guys. She said she was concerned that this would put Democrats and people of color at risk. Rep. Moss said she opposes the bill on the basis that people need permits, classes, and training. Rep. Brooks said the data shows that this is good policy.

Yeas: 54

Nays: 19

N/V: 2

**Outcome: 1st substitute passed and was sent to the Senate.**