

State House bill proposes concealed carry for young adults

Measure requires training, background checks for permits

BY ZOE LEWIS
FOR THE TRIBUNE-COURIER

Kentucky House Bill 312 would allow 18- to 20-year-olds to obtain a provisional concealed carry license, as long as they complete firearm safety training and pass a background check. Regional law enforcement and a Graves County gun shop owner support the proposal.

Zach Dunn, the owner of Personal Defense Dynamics in Graves County, said he shares the same sentiment.

“Giving them the basics of how to handle the weapon and how to do it safely, and how to be safe, not only with handling the weapon, but also carrying the weapon and storing it in their home. That’s a big thing for me because I think that’s a big, big way to prevent any accidents and help reduce any accidents in the home or while carrying a weapon,” Dunn said.

Dunn said he is already seeing young adults apply for his concealed carry licenses, but they are unable to receive them. He said that since it can take a while to receive their permit, some people might push back their training or never receive it.

“If we can take advantage of getting that person in a classroom with other people and learning basic skills, I think that would be good,”



A handgun case at Zach Dunn's gun shop, Personal Defense Dynamics, is shown.

Dunn said.

McCracken County Sheriff Ryan Norman said the bill could bring many benefits, including young adults better protecting themselves.

“Law enforcement is obviously not everywhere, and can’t get to some places in time,” Norman said. “There’s many examples just in our area where a firearm has saved somebody’s life.”

He also said openly carrying a firearm can cause unease in public, whereas a concealed one would not.

“I’m an advocate for concealed carry, simply because when people see somebody walking around with a firearm, it can cause alarm,” Norman said.

Current state law does not require those with concealed carry permits to take any firearm safety training. HB 312 would require firearm safety training, which Norman said would benefit everyone.

“The pros would be that they’re getting some firearm training if they’re between 18 and 21 for the provisional license, which is always good. I would hope that anybody that’s carrying a firearm goes through some type of training, but I think it is especially good for the younger generations,” Norman said.

State Rep. Kim Hollo-way, who represents Graves and McCracken counties, is one of the bill’s sponsors.

In a statement, she wrote, “(the bill) acknowledges the reality that these young adults already have the legal right to carry and ensures they can do so in a safer, more responsible manner by allowing concealed carry only after training and vetting. Requiring education and background checks strikes an important balance between personal responsibility and public safety. This issue is particularly important for young women. Openly carrying a firearm can make someone a target and increase the risk of being overpowered or having their weapon taken. Concealed carry allows individuals to better protect themselves



Zach Dunn, a Symsonia gun shop owner, said he is in favor of HB 312.

without drawing attention or escalating risk.”

According to a social media post, State Rep. Chad Aull said he opposes the bill and that it would put kids at greater risk.

“My overarching concern is that this legislation is going to cause an accident, and more people are going to be harmed when it’s not necessary,” Aull said.

According to a Kentucky Legislative Research Commission news release, House Minority Caucus Chair Lindsey Burke, who represents Lexington, said she has concerns about how the bill would give easier access for those

who have suicidal ideation.

“I’m not even thinking about accidents or using the firearm against someone else,” Burke said. “I think about the young people who go to college or trade school out into the community, and they kill themselves. I don’t want these kids to have an easier time getting a gun.”

However, proponents of the bill state that it does not provide young adults with more access to guns — only the ability to conceal their guns.

HB 312 has passed through the House of Representatives and now sits in a Senate committee.

Stop & Share event returns Feb. 7

Supply drive supports domestic violence programs

BY TRIBUNE-COURIER STAFF

PADUCAH — Shop & Share returns Saturday, Feb. 7, offering grocery shoppers the opportunity share items with local domestic violence programs.

The one-day drive aims to ensure those at domestic violence shelters have access to everyday essentials. Volunteers will be onsite at participating grocery stores with lists of what supplies are most needed.

The event is held annually on the Saturday before the Super Bowl. In 2025, it raised over \$349,000 in cash and in-kind donations.

Shop & Share was started in 2008 by former Kentucky First Lady Jane Beshear — since then, the event has raised more than \$6 million for domestic violence programs.

This year, Kentucky First Lady Brittainy

Beshear partnered with ZeroV, a statewide coalition formerly known as the Kentucky Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

“As First Lady, my number one goal is to make our commonwealth a safer place for all our families,” Beshear said. “Sadly, in Kentucky, more than 45% of women and 35% of men experience some form of domestic violence in their lifetime. These are not just numbers. They are our neighbors — from every community in our state.”

According to Beshear, Kentucky’s domestic violence shelters housed more than 2,300 people in 2025.

Locally, multiple Kroger stores in Paducah and one in Murray are participating, with all supporting Merryman House Domestic Crisis Center, which serves Ballard, Calloway, Carlisle, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Marshall, and

McCracken counties.

“Shop & Share brings in thousands of dollars worth of food, which is thousands that can help remove other barriers for survivors,” said the Merryman House director of mission advancement in a news release. “Every tuna pouch or pack of crackers really does make an impact, so if you’re out shopping on Saturday, please come and share an item (or two) with a survivor.”

Mary Foley, executive director at Merryman House, said the donations help the center benefit survivors by freeing Merryman House’s operating costs to direct funds to life-saving services.

To find a location, visit zerov.org/shopandshare_map?page=5.

“To the survivors out there who may be listening: I want you to know that there is help. You are brave. And your courage will get you and your family to better days. And we’re here to support you,” Beshear said.

Editor’s note: The



Merryman House Domestic Crisis Center
An image from the 2025 Shop & Share event.

National Domestic Violence hotline can be reached at 1-800-799-7233 or by texting “START” to 88788. Services are free and available 24/7. Locally, the Merryman House Domestic Crisis Center’s 24-hour crisis line can be contacted at 1-800-585-2686.

Man who tried to shoot Trump at a Florida golf course gets life in prison

BY DAVID FISCHER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

FORT PIERCE, Fla. — A man convicted of trying to assassinate President Donald Trump on a Florida golf course in 2024 was sentenced Wednesday to life in prison after a federal prosecutor said his crime was unacceptable “in this country or anywhere.”

U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon pro-

nounced Ryan Routh’s fate in the same Fort Pierce courtroom that erupted into chaos in September when he tried to stab himself shortly after jurors found him guilty on all counts.

“American democracy does not work when individuals take it into their own hands to eliminate candidates. That’s what this individual tried to do” Assis-

tant U.S. Attorney John Shipley told the judge.

Defense attorney Martin L. Roth argued that “at the moment of truth, he chose not to pull the trigger.”

The judge pushed back, noting Routh’s history of arrests, to which Roth said, “He’s a complex person, I’ll give the court that, but he has a very good core.”

Routh then read from

a rambling, 20-page statement. Cannon broke in, said none of what he was saying was relevant and gave him five more minutes to talk.

“I did everything I could and lived a good life,” Routh said, before the judge cut him off.

“Your plot to kill was deliberate and evil,” she said. “You are not a peaceful man. You are not a good man.”

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Bull Blowout

Contestants Under 18 Must Have a Legal Guardian Present. Contestants May Enter Both Nights In Any Event. Books Open February 2nd (4 p.m. until 9 p.m.)

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