

Most 'Gun-Free Zones' Could Soon Be History in Wyoming

By [Cam Edwards](#) | 10:01 AM | January 24, 2025 [Story source: Bearing Arms](#)

Wyoming already has some of the best gun laws in the country, but lawmakers see room for improvement when it comes to "sensitive places" where lawful carry is not allowed.

HB 172, approved by the Wyoming House on an overwhelming 50-10 vote on Thursday, would [ditch the "gun-free zone" status](#) for the state capitol building, the University of Wyoming campus and most buildings, and K-12 schools. While gun owners could lawfully carry in governmental meetings and most publicly accessible buildings without a carry permit (so long as they can lawfully possess a gun), a concealed carry license would be required to carry on both K-12 and university campuses.

An amendment Rep. Steve Harshman, R-Casper, brought to prohibit people aged 18-21-years old from concealed carrying in their school or other public schools was rejected by the House on a 32-27 vote. The amendment was directed at high school seniors who turn 18 before they graduate school and did not cover community colleges or universities.

Harshman, a retired schoolteacher, mentioned how you must be 21 to drink alcohol and work certain occupations.

"I've worked most of my life around kids this age, raised my own four kids ... when that school bell rings is that what we want?" he questioned. "I just think as a person that's been around kids my whole life probably pause on this."

This exception was actually included in Haroldson's 2024 version of the bill, but he said he purposely left it out of this year's bill in order to facilitate discussion on the matter. Although he didn't take a stance on the amendment, Haroldson did vote against it.

"I think that's a great thing to have a conversation about," he said. "As we build these types of bills, these are the battles we fight."

I suspect that will be a contentious provision when HB 172 is debated in the Senate as well, and I'll be curious to see if the language survives intact. Most, if not all, public school systems in Wyoming already prohibit students from having weapons of any type while on campus, so carving out an exception for 18-year-olds with concealed carry licenses is going to be controversial, to put it mildly.

For those concerned about the thought of a high school senior bringing a concealed handgun into her classroom, there is a middle ground: students with concealed carry licenses could lawfully store their firearms in their vehicles on campus or in a lockbox within the school. Honestly, I suspect that in practice, few (if any) school districts would have to deal with this issue, but that, to me anyway, seems like a decent way to protect the Second Amendment rights of adult students while addressing the concerns of faculty, parents, and students who might be concerned about 18-year-olds bringing guns to class.

The House also turned away amendments that would have prohibited open and concealed carry at early childhood education centers and allowed government entities the authority to bar concealed carry of firearms at meetings.

We'll see if it gets watered down once the Senate takes up the legislation, but at the moment HB 172 would be a major expansion of the right to carry in a state that already does a great job of recognizing and protecting our Second Amendment rights.