

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Judiciary

BILL: CS/SB 52

INTRODUCER: Criminal Justice Committee and Senators Gaetz and Osgood

SUBJECT: Security Services at Places of Worship

DATE: January 16, 2026

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Cellon</u>	<u>Stokes</u>	<u>CJ</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2.	<u>Collazo</u>	<u>Cibula</u>	<u>JU</u>	<u>Pre-meeting</u>
3.	_____	_____	<u>RC</u>	_____

Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

I. Summary:

CS/SB 52 expressly provides that chapter 494, F.S., which regulates private investigative services, private security services, and repossession services, does not apply to volunteers who provide armed security services on the premises of a church, mosque, synagogue, or other place of worship.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2026.

II. Present Situation:

Violence at Houses of Worship

According to research spanning from 2000 to 2024, there have been 379 incidents of violence in houses of worship in the U.S. resulting in approximately 487 deaths and 172 injuries.¹ The majority of homicides at houses of worship are not related to the religious ideology of where they occur, but the killings that *are* ideologically motivated have been among the most deadly.²

According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), the best way to mitigate a potential attack is to take a holistic approach to security. This requires assigning clear

¹ The Violence Prevention Project Research Center, Hamline University, *House of Worship Homicides*, <https://www.theviolenceproject.org/house-of-worship-homicides/> (last visited January 14, 2026).

² *Id.*

roles and responsibilities for making security and planning decisions. It also requires implementing the procedures and capabilities across an organization. A robust security plan should be tailored to the specific needs and priorities of each house of worship.³ CISA recommends the following options for consideration:

- Establish a multi-layered plan for security, identifying clear roles and responsibilities for developing and implementing security measures.
- Create emergency action plans, business continuity plans, and incident response plans that are well communicated and exercised with the Safety Team⁴ for complete understanding.
- Conduct a vulnerability assessment to understand the risks to the house of worship and based on that assessment, prioritize the implementation of safety measures.
- Build community readiness and resilience by establishing an organizational culture of caring where all members and visitors are properly supported, and credible threats are reported through previously identified channels.
- Apply physical security measures to monitor and protect the outer, middle, and inner perimeters, while respecting the purpose of each area of the house of worship.
- Focus on the safety of children by implementing safety measures around childcare, daycare, and schools.
- Implement cybersecurity best practices to safeguard important information and prevent a potential cyberattack.⁵

Division of Licensing

The Division of Licensing within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services administers Florida's concealed weapon licensing program⁶ and oversees the state's private investigative, private security, and recovery services industries.⁷ The division's regulatory oversight of these services includes licensing, enforcing compliance standards, and ensuring public protection from unethical business practices and unlicensed activity.⁸

The division also licenses and regulates the private security industry. People who work in the private security industry typically offer the following services for compensation:

- Bodyguard protection.
- Property protection.
- Transportation of prisoners.
- Armored car services.
- Theft prevention.

³ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, *Mitigating Attacks on Houses of Worship Security Guide*, 90-91 (Dec. 2020), available at <https://www.cisa.gov/resources-tools/resources/mitigating-attacks-houses-worship-security-guide>.

⁴ The "Safety Team" includes greeters and volunteers as the first line of defense in identifying and reporting suspicious activity. *Id.* at 34.

⁵ *Id.* at 90-91.

⁶ See s. 790.06, F.S.

⁷ See generally ch. 493, F.S.

⁸ Division of Licensing, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, *Division of Licensing*, <https://www.fdacs.gov/divisions-offices/licensing> (last visited Jan. 14, 2026).

- Prevention of the misappropriation or concealment of articles of value or assisting in the return of such articles.⁹

Any individual who performs the services of a security officer must have a Class “D” license.¹⁰ To carry a firearm in the performance of regulated security duties, security officers and agency managers must also obtain a Class “G” Statewide Firearm License.¹¹ No employee may carry or be furnished a firearm unless it is required by the employing agency. The firearm must be carried openly unless otherwise provided by law.¹²

The licensing statute, chapter 493, F.S., does not, however, apply to certain individuals or to certain places, including:

- Any individual who is an “officer,”¹³ or is a law enforcement officer of the U.S. Government, if such local, state, or federal officer is engaged in his or her official duties or performing off-duty security activities approved by his or her superiors.
- Any insurance investigator or adjuster licensed by a state or federal licensing authority if he or she is providing services or expert advice within the scope of his or her license.
- Any attorney in the regular practice of his or her profession.
- Any bank or bank holding company, credit union, or small loan company operating pursuant to state law; any consumer credit reporting agency regulated under federal law; or any collection agency not engaged in repossessions or any permanent employee of the collection agency.
- Any person who is a school crossing guard employed by a third party or a city or county and trained in accordance with state law.¹⁴

Notably, the licensing statute also does not apply to any individual employed as a security officer by a church or ecclesiastical or denominational organization, provided the church or organization has an established physical place of worship in the state and nonprofit religious services and activities regularly occur there. The statute also does not apply to any individual employed by a church cemetery to provide security on the property of the organization or the cemetery. In either case, the security officer may *not* carry a firearm while performing his or her duties.¹⁵

Carrying a Concealed Weapon or Firearm

A person is licensed or authorized to carry a concealed weapon or firearm if he or she is:

⁹ Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, *Private Security Licenses*, <https://www.fdacs.gov/Business-Services/Private-Security-Licenses> (last viewed January 14, 2026).

¹⁰ *Id.* An applicant for a Class “D” Security Officer License must complete 40 hours of training at a licensed school or training facility or qualify for an exception. Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, *Class “D” Security Officer License Requirements*, <https://www.fdacs.gov/Business-Services/Private-Security-Licenses/Class-D-Security-Officer-License-Requirements> (last viewed January 14, 2026).

¹¹ Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, *Private Security Licenses*, <https://www.fdacs.gov/Business-Services/Private-Security-Licenses> (last viewed January 14, 2026).

¹² *Id.*

¹³ “Officer” means any person employed or appointed as a full-time, part-time, or auxiliary law enforcement officer, correctional officer, or correctional probation officer. Section 943.10(14), F.S.

¹⁴ *See generally* s. 493.6102, F.S.

¹⁵ Section 493.6102(13), F.S.

- A concealed carry licensee.¹⁶
- Not a concealed carry licensee but otherwise satisfies the criteria for receiving and maintaining the concealed carry license.¹⁷

Anyone licensed or authorized to carry a concealed firearm must carry identification and show it to a law enforcement officer if asked to do so.¹⁸

State law identifies certain locations where a person is not permitted to carry a weapon or firearm or openly carry a handgun, even if the person has a concealed carry license or authorization.¹⁹

These locations are:

- Places of nuisance.²⁰
- Police, sheriff, or highway patrol stations.
- Detention facilities, prisons, or jails.
- Courthouses.
- Courtrooms, except that nothing in state law precludes a judge from carrying a concealed weapon or concealed firearm or determining who will carry a concealed weapon or concealed firearm in his or her courtroom.
- Polling places.
- Meetings of the governing body of a county, public school district, municipality, or special district.
- Meetings of the Legislature or a committee of the Legislature.
- Schools, colleges, or professional athletic events not related to firearms.
- Elementary or secondary school facilities or administration buildings.
- Career centers.
- Establishments licensed to dispense alcoholic beverages for consumption on the premises.
- College or university facilities unless the licensee is a registered student, employee, or faculty member of the college or university and the weapon meets certain other criteria.
- Inside of a passenger terminal or sterile area of any airport except as otherwise permitted by law if encased and checked in as baggage for transport on a plane.
- Places where the carrying of firearms is prohibited by federal law.²¹

The Legislature has addressed the issue of concealed carry within churches, synagogues, and other religious institutions. For the purposes of safety, security, personal protection, or any other lawful purpose, a person licensed under state law may carry a concealed weapon or concealed firearm on property owned, rented, leased, borrowed, or lawfully used by a church, synagogue, or other religious institution. However, the private property rights of the church, synagogue, or other religious institution take priority, and they may prohibit individuals from bringing weapons onto their property.²²

¹⁶ Section 790.01(1)(a), F.S. (requiring the person to be licensed under s. 790.06, F.S.).

¹⁷ Section 790.01(1)(b), F.S. (requiring the person to otherwise satisfy the criteria for receiving and maintaining such a license under s. 790.06(2)(a)-(f) and (i)-(n), (3), and (10), F.S.).

¹⁸ Sections 790.06(1)(c) and 790.013(1), F.S.

¹⁹ Sections 790.06(12)(a)1.-15. and 790.013(2), F.S.

²⁰ Section 823.05, F.S., provides a list of public nuisances.

²¹ Sections 790.06(12)(a)1.-15. and 790.013(2), F.S.

²² Section 790.06(13), F.S.

Level 2 Background Screening

A Level 2 background screening is a comprehensive criminal background check that includes fingerprint-based checks for disqualifying offenses in statewide and national criminal history records. It is typically required for positions of trust or responsibility.²³ For example, health care practitioners must comply with background screening requirements when applying for initial licensure or when renewing their licenses.²⁴

Security background investigations must ensure that individuals have not been arrested for, been found guilty of, or been adjudicated delinquent for any one of several disqualifying offenses identified in state law, including but not limited to:

- Lewd or lascivious offenses committed upon or in the presence of an elderly person or disabled adult.
- Encouraging or recruiting another to join a criminal gang.
- Murder.²⁵

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill amends s. 493.6102, F.S., to add an additional exception to the application of chapter 493, F.S., which regulates private investigative services, private security services, and repossession services. The additional exception expressly provides that the chapter does not apply to any person who, on a voluntary basis and without compensation, provides armed security services on the premises of a church, mosque, synagogue, or other place of worship.

The bill also reenacts subsection (4) of s. 493.6201, F.S., to incorporate the amendment to s. 493.6102, F.S.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2026.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

²³ See s. 110.1127(2), F.S.; see also University of Florida Administrators, *Level 2 Background Screening*, <https://admin.hr.ufl.edu/hiring/pre-employment-screenings/level-2-background-screening/> (last visited Jan. 14, 2026).

²⁴ Section 456.0135, F.S.; see also Florida Department of Health, *Background Screening, Screening Requirements*, <https://flhealthsource.gov/background-screening/bgs-requirements/> (last visited Jan. 14, 2026). Fingerprint retention requirements do not apply to emergency medical technicians, paramedics, pharmacy interns, registered pharmacy technicians, and radiologic technologists. These professions are exempt unless applying through the military active-duty spouse licensure pathway. *Id.*

²⁵ See generally s. 435.04(2), F.S.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends sections of the Florida Statutes: 493.6102, 493.6201.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS by Criminal Justice on January 12, 2026:

The committee substitute removed requirements placed on people who provide volunteer armed security for churches and other places of worship and made it clear that people who volunteer to provide such security are not subject to the same licensing requirements of a paid security service.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
