

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 Criminal Justice

BILL: SB 896

INTRODUCER: Senator Gaetz

SUBJECT: School Safety

DATE: February 10, 2025 REVISED: _____

| ANALYST | STAFF DIRECTOR | REFERENCE | ACTION |
|------------------|----------------|------------|--------------------|
| 1. <u>Cellon</u> | <u>Stokes</u> | <u>CJ</u> | <u>Pre-meeting</u> |
| 2. _____ | _____ | <u>AHE</u> | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ | <u>RC</u> | _____ |

I. Summary:

SB 896 creates s. 1006.601, F.S., to require each public postsecondary educational institution to:

- Adopt an active assailant plan;
- In cooperation with local law enforcement agencies and local government, adopt a family reunification plan;
- Train faculty to detect and respond to mental health issues;
- Post on its website a mental health awareness and suicide prevention sign;
- Establish threat management teams; and
- In collaboration with appropriate public safety agencies, annually conduct a security risk assessment at each campus using the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool.

The bill amends s. 1006.07, F.S., to provide that training provided by the school safety specialist for classroom teachers and other instructional staff must explain the purpose, importance, and proper execution of school safety protocols and emergency procedures.

Section 1003.25, F.S., is amended by the bill to require that a student's specified records follow such student to a Florida College System institution or state university should he or she enroll there.

The bill amends s. 943.082, F.S., to require public postsecondary educational institutions,¹ be made aware of and promote the use of the mobile suspicious activity reporting tool (FortifyFL) by:

- Advertising it on the institution website,
- Installing it on all mobile devices issued by the institution, and

¹ Public postsecondary educational institutions include workforce education; Florida College System institutions; state universities; and all other state-supported postsecondary educational institutions that are authorized and established by law. s. 1000.04(3), F.S.

- Bookmarking the website on all computer devices maintained by the institution.

The bill amends s. 30.15, F.S., to authorize local sheriffs to provide employees and faculty from the following institutions access to the Chris Hixon, Coach Aaron Feis, and Coach Scott Beigel school Guardian Program:

- Public postsecondary educational institutions;
- Workforce education;
- Florida College System Institutions;
- State universities; and
- All other state-supported postsecondary educational institutions.

The bill amends s. 790.06(12), F.S., to provide an exception from the prohibition against openly carrying a handgun, a concealed weapon or concealed firearm into any college or university facility. The exception applies to:

- Employees or faculty members of such college or university who are *not* a registered student at such college or university; *or*
- *A registered student at such college or university who is an employee or faculty member of the college or university.* This provision applies to registered students at times during which he or she is performing the duties of his or her position as an employee or faculty member of the college or university.

The bill amends s. 790.115, F.S., to create a second degree felony offense if a person possesses any firearm, electric weapon or device, destructive device, or other weapon, including a razor blade or box cutter, except as authorized in support of school-sanctioned activities, at a school-sponsored event or on the property of any school, school bus, or school bus stop² *and* he or she discharges any weapon or firearm within 1,000 feet of a school, during school hours or during the time of a sanctioned school activity, *unless* discharged for lawful defense of himself or herself or another or for a lawful purpose.

This crime is ranked as a level 6 in the Offense Severity Ranking Chart.

The bill may have a fiscal impact on the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) and public postsecondary educational institutions. *See Section V., Fiscal Impact Statement.*

The bill takes effect upon becoming a law except for Sections 3 and 4 of the bill which takes effect on October 1, 2026.

² Section 790.115(2)(a), F.S.

II. Present Situation:

School Safety

Florida universities have been the location of various types of firearm related incidents, including school shootings. Generally, carrying a firearm on university campuses is prohibited.³ While universities may have campus police, the guardian program does not extend to universities.

The Florida State University was the site of a deadly shooting in April 2025. The shooting left two dead and six wounded.⁴ It was the second such shooting on the Florida State campus, the first occurring in November 2014 at the Strozier Library. That shooting left one victim paralyzed from the hips down and two others wounded.⁵ To date there has been no other reported Florida college campus shooting.⁶

Additionally, there was a shooting at Florida State University where a person residing at a fraternity house tested a mounted flashlight on top of a firearm. He pointed the weapon and shined the light on the faces of others in the room. When he pointed the weapon, it fired, striking two individuals and killing one of them.⁷

A person holding an active certification from the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission as a law enforcement officer, correctional officer, or correctional probation officer is exempt from the licensing requirements of s. 790.06, F.S.⁸ According to the Attorney General, there are currently seven university police departments in Florida at the following universities:

- Florida A & M University,
- Florida Atlantic University,
- Florida State University,
- University of Central Florida,
- University of Florida,
- University of North Florida,
- University of South Florida.⁹

Postsecondary Safety Summit

On October 8, 2025, the State University System (SUS) hosted a safety summit for university leadership and Florida College System leaders. This event provided an opportunity for

³ See ss. 790.06(12), F.S., and 790.115, F.S.

⁴ “FSUPD officers receive Governor’s Medal of Heroism”, Florida State University News; April 25, 2025; available at <https://news.fsu.edu/news/university-news/2025/04/30/114369/>; (last viewed February 9, 2026).

⁵ “Shooting at Strozier Library stuns Florida State”, Sean Rossman, Updated November 21, 2014; available at <https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/local/fsu-news/2014/11/20/shooting-strozier-library-stuns-florida-state/70040320/>. (last viewed February 4, 2026)

⁶ For a thorough list of college shootings from August 1966 to December 2025, see US News, “A List of Deadly Shootings on College Campuses in the US,” Associated Press, December 13, 2025, available at <https://www.usnews.com/news/us/articles/2025-12-13/a-list-of-deadly-shootings-on-college-campuses-in-the-us>. (last viewed February 9, 2026).

⁷ *Wilhelm v. Secretary, Florida Department of Corrections*, (USCA 11, Case: 22-11991, Document 26-1, Filed 1/31/2024)

⁸ Section 790.06(5)(b), F.S.

⁹ See the Campus Law Enforcement list at The Attorney General’s website, available at <https://www.myfloridalegal.com/citizen-safety-center/campus-law-enforcement>. (last viewed February 9, 2026).

collaboration across the state on key safety issues, including building hardening, threat assessment, and communications.¹⁰ The results of the summit were a series of recommendations related to the following areas of campus security:

- Building hardening;
- Threat assessment;
- Training for faculty and staff;
- Communications;
- Interagency coordination; and
- Tasks for the board office including:
 - Develop a plan with the Florida Colleges and K-12 to share information on threats and behavioral risks across systems.
 - Convene meetings of the SUS police chiefs to encourage better coordination across the System regarding safety, threat mitigation, and training.
 - Identify opportunities for collaboration with state law enforcement agencies.
 - Convene a follow-up to the SUS Safety Summit for university staff who work directly with safety, student affairs, and campus preparedness.¹¹

K – 12 School Safety and Security

The Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission was established within the FDLE during the 2018 legislative session. The legislation represents a comprehensive approach to identifying and addressing issues presented by the tragedy that occurred at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. The Commission was formed to analyze information from the school shooting and other mass violence incidents in the state and address recommendations and safety system improvements.¹² The Commission sunsets July 1, 2026.¹³

One of the early tasks undertaken by the FDLE, in collaboration with the Department of Legal Affairs, was to procure a mobile suspicious activity reporting tool that allows students and the community to relay information anonymously concerning unsafe, potentially harmful, dangerous, violent, or criminal activities, or the threat of these activities, to appropriate public safety agencies and school officials. As recommended by students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, the program is named “FortifyFL.” At a minimum, the FDLE must receive reports electronically through the mobile suspicious activity reporting tool.¹⁴

The Department of Education, Office of Safe Schools (OSS) serves as a central repository for school-safety best practices, training standards, and compliance oversight in all matters regarding school safety and security, including prevention efforts, intervention efforts, and emergency preparedness planning.¹⁵

¹⁰ Florida Board of Governors, *SUS Safety Summit*, p. 2, available at <https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Safety-Summit-Report-DRAFT.pdf> (last viewed February 9, 2026).

¹¹ *Id.* at 4.

¹² Section 943.687, F.S.; The Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission, School Safety Commission, available at <https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/MSDHS/Home>, (last viewed February 9, 2026).

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ Section 1001.212, F.S.

The OSS has developed and implemented a statewide risk-assessment tool¹⁶, and provides training and technical assistance. The OSS also conducts triennial unannounced compliance inspections of public schools.¹⁷

The OSS has also developed a statewide behavioral threat management operational process, a Florida-specific behavioral threat assessment instrument, and a threat management portal.¹⁸

The Chris Hixon, Coach Aaron Feis, and Coach Scott Beigel Guardian Program

County Sheriffs may provide training for school guardians or school security guards for school district, charter school, private school, child care facility, or security agency employees, either directly or through a contract with another sheriff's office that has established a guardian program.¹⁹ The training program is a standardized statewide curriculum, and each sheriff providing such training must adhere to the course of instruction.²⁰

Each district school board and superintendent must ensure that one or more safe-school officers are assigned to every public school facility in the district, including charter schools, and may use any combination of the statutory options to meet this requirement.²¹

Private schools and licensed child care facilities are authorized to partner with a law enforcement or security agency to establish or assign a safe-school officer to their schools. The private school or child care facility is responsible for any costs associated with implementing a safe-school officer, including training under the Guardian Program. A private school or child care facility electing to establish a safe-school officer must comply with the same statutory requirements for these officers as school districts and charter schools.²²

A sheriff who establishes a program must consult with the FDLE on programmatic guiding principles, practices, and resources, and must certify as school guardians, without the power of arrest, school employees, or certify as school security guards those persons employed by a security agency who meet specified criteria, and who:

- Hold a valid license or are otherwise eligible to possess or carry a concealed firearm.
- After satisfying the requirements, complete a 144-hour training program, consisting of 12 hours of training to improve the school guardian's knowledge and skills necessary to respond to and de-escalate incidents on school premises and;

¹⁶ The Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool (FSSAT) is a security risk assessment tool that helps school officials identify threats, vulnerabilities, and appropriate safety controls for the schools that they supervise. The FSSAT is the primary physical site security assessment tool used by school officials at each school district and public school site to conduct security assessments. s. 1006.1493, F.S.

¹⁷ Sections 1001.212, and 1006.1493, F.S.

¹⁸ Section 1001.212(11), F.S. See Florida Department of Education, *Behavioral Threat Management*, available at <https://www.fl DOE.org/safe-schools/threat-assessment.shtml> (last viewed February 9, 2026).

¹⁹ Section 30.15(1)(k), F.S.

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ Section 1006.12, F.S.

²² Section 1002.42(20) and 402.305(20), F.S.

- 132 total hours of comprehensive firearm safety and proficiency training conducted by Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission-certified instructors, which must include:
 - Eighty hours of firearms instruction based on the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission's Law Enforcement Academy training model, which must include at least 10 percent but no more than 20 percent more rounds fired than associated with academy training. Program participants must achieve an 85 percent pass rate on the firearms training.
 - Sixteen hours of instruction in precision pistol;
 - Eight hours of discretionary shooting instruction using state-of-the-art simulator exercises;
 - Sixteen hours of instruction in active shooter or assailant scenarios;
 - Eight hours of instruction in defensive tactics; and
 - Four hours of instruction in legal issues.
- Pass a psychological evaluation administered by a licensed psychologist and designated by the FDLE and submit the results of the evaluation to the sheriff's office. The FDLE is authorized to provide the sheriff's office with mental health and substance abuse data for compliance with this requirement.
- Submit to and pass an initial drug test and subsequent random drug tests in accordance with statute and the sheriff's office.
- Successfully complete ongoing training, weapon inspection, and firearm qualification on at least an annual basis.²³

A person who is certified may serve as a school guardian, only if he or she is appointed by the applicable school district superintendent, charter school principal, private school head of school, or child care facility owner.

The FDLE must maintain a list of all individuals appointed as school guardians or employed as school security guards that includes name, certification date, date of appointment, including the name of the school, information reported by the Department of Education related to a safe-school officer discharging their firearms or being subject to discipline, and end date of appointment, if applicable. The FDLE must remove anyone from the list whose required guardian training has expired.²⁴ School districts are required to review the list maintained by the FDLE prior to appointing an individual as a school guardian or school security guard.²⁵

Safe-school officer options include:

- *School resource officer (SRO)*. A district may establish an SRO program by agreement with a law enforcement agency; SROs must be certified law enforcement officers, undergo criminal background checks, drug testing, and a psychological evaluation, abide by district policies, and coordinate with the principal while remaining employees of the law enforcement agency.²⁶

²³ Section 30.15(1)(k)2., F.S.

²⁴ F.S. 30.15(1)(k)3.c., F.S.

²⁵ F. S. 1006.12(3)(b), F.S.

²⁶ Section 1006.12(1)(a)–(b), F.S.

- *School safety officer.* A district may commission one or more school safety officers who are certified law enforcement officers employed by a law enforcement agency or by the district; safety officers have arrest authority on school property and authority to carry weapons while on duty.²⁷
- *School guardian.* A district or charter governing board may participate in the state guardian program; eligible employees who complete the statutory requirements and are certified by the sheriff may serve as school guardians.²⁸
- *School security guard.* A district or charter governing board may contract with a licensed security agency to provide a school security guard who holds Class “D” and Class “G” licenses and meets statutory training, screening, approval, and ongoing qualification requirements.²⁹

Sworn law-enforcement officers serving as safe-school officers (school resource officers and school safety officers) must complete mental-health crisis-intervention training using a nationally developed curriculum.³⁰ School guardians and school security guards must complete the sheriff-conducted 144-hour guardian training program, which includes de-escalation and comprehensive firearms safety and proficiency, with security guards also subject to screening and ongoing qualification requirements.³¹

K-12 Student Records

Section 1003.25, F.S., requires that a public K-12 student’s cumulative record be maintained at his or her current school and should the student transfer schools, that the record be transferred also within five school days.³² The records must include, if applicable:

- Verified reports of serious or recurrent behavior patterns, including any threat assessment report, all corresponding documentation, and any other information required by the Florida-specific behavioral threat assessment instrument which contains the evaluation, intervention, and management of the threat assessment evaluations and intervention services.
- Psychological evaluations, including therapeutic treatment plans and therapy or progress notes created or maintained by school district or charter school staff, as appropriate.³³

²⁷ Section 1006.12(2), F.S.

²⁸ Section 1006.12(3), F.S.; s. 30.15(1)(k), F.S.

²⁹ Section 1006.12(4)(a)–(c), F.S.; Chapter 493, F.S.

³⁰ Section 1006.12(4)(a)–(c), F.S.; Chapter 493, F.S.

³¹ Section 30.15(1)(k)2.b., F.S.; s. 1006.12(4)(a)1.-5., F.S.; s. 30.15(1)(k)2.e., F.S.

³² Section 1003.25, F.S.

³³ Section 1003.25(2), F.S.

Possession of or Discharging a Firearm on School Property

A person is prohibited from willfully and knowingly possessing any firearm,³⁴ electric weapon or device,³⁵ destructive device,³⁶ or other weapon³⁷ on the property of any school,³⁸ school bus, or school bus stop, except as authorized in support of school-sanctioned activities.³⁹ A violation is punishable as a third degree felony,⁴⁰ except that a person who is authorized to carry a concealed weapon or concealed firearm is subject only to a second degree misdemeanor.⁴¹ A person who discharges a weapon or firearm at a school-sanctioned event or on the property of any school, school bus, or school bus stop is subject to a second degree felony⁴² regardless of whether he or she is authorized to carry a concealed weapon or concealed firearm, unless such weapon or firearm was discharged for lawful defense of himself, herself, or another person.⁴³

A violation for discharging a weapon or firearm at a school is ranked as a level 6 offense on the offense severity ranking chart (OSRC).⁴⁴ Felony offenses which are subject to the Criminal Punishment Code⁴⁵ are listed in the OSRC,⁴⁶ which uses 10 offense levels to rank felonies from

³⁴ “Firearm” means any weapon (including a starter gun) which will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; any destructive device; or any machine gun. The term “firearm” does not include an antique firearm unless the antique firearm is used in the commission of a crime. s. 790.001(9), F.S.

³⁵ “Electric weapon or device” means any device which, through the application or use of electrical current, is designed, redesigned, used, or intended to be used for offensive or defensive purposes, the destruction of life, or the infliction of injury. s. 790.001(7), F.S.

³⁶ “Destructive device” means any bomb, grenade, mine, rocket, missile, pipebomb, or similar device containing an explosive, incendiary, or poison gas and includes any frangible container filled with an explosive, incendiary, explosive gas, or expanding gas, which is designed or so constructed as to explode by such filler and is capable of causing bodily harm or property damage; any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into a destructive device and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled; any device declared a destructive device by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms; any type of weapon which will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of any explosive and which has a barrel with a bore of one-half inch or more in diameter; and ammunition for such destructive devices, but not including shotgun shells or any other ammunition designed for use in a firearm other than a destructive device. The section provides exceptions to what constitutes a “destructive device.”

³⁷ “Weapon” means any dirk, knife, metallic knuckles, slungshot, billie, tear gas gun, chemical weapon or device, or other deadly weapon except a firearm or a common pocketknife, plastic knife, or blunt-bladed table knife. s. 790.001(20), F.S.

³⁸ “School” means any preschool, elementary school, middle school, junior high school, secondary school, career center, or postsecondary school. s. 790.115(2)(a), F.S.

³⁹ A person may carry a firearm at a school or school-related location:

- In a case to a firearms program, class or function which has been approved in advance by the principal or chief administrative officer of the school as a program or class to which firearms could be carried;
- In a case to a career center having a firearms training range; or
- In a vehicle pursuant to s. 790.25(4), F.S., except that school districts may adopt written and published policies that waive the exception in this subparagraph for purposes of student and campus parking privileges.

s. 790.115(2)(a)1.– 3., F.S.

⁴⁰ A third degree felony is punishable by up to five years imprisonment and a \$5,000 fine. ss. 775.082, 775.083, or 775.084, F.S.

⁴¹ A second degree misdemeanor is punishable by up to 60 days in jail and a \$500 fine. ss. 775.082 or 775.083, F.S.

⁴² A second degree felony is punishable by up to 15 years imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine. ss. 775.082, 775.083, or 775.084, F.S.

⁴³ Section 790.115(2)(d), F.S.

⁴⁴ Section 921.0022(3)(f), F.S.

⁴⁵ All felony offenses, with the exception of capital felonies, committed on or after October 1, 1998, are subject to the Criminal Punishment Code. s. 921.002, F.S.

⁴⁶ s. 921.0022, F.S.

least severe to most severe. Each felony offense listed in the OSRC is assigned a level according to the severity of the offense.^{47, 48} A person's primary offense, any other current offenses, and prior convictions are scored using the points designated for the offense severity level of each offense.^{49, 50} The final score calculation, following the scoresheet formula, determines the lowest permissible sentence that a trial court may impose, absent a valid reason for departure.⁵¹

Carrying a Concealed Weapon or Firearm With or Without a License

The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) is statutorily authorized to issue concealed weapon and concealed firearm licenses to applicants who qualify.⁵² For purposes of the concealed carry licensure law, "concealed weapons or concealed firearms" means a handgun, electronic weapon or device, tear gas gun, knife, or billie, but not a machine gun.⁵³

A person is authorized to carry a concealed weapon or concealed firearm⁵⁴ if he or she is:

- Licensed under s. 790.06, F.S.; *or*
- Not licensed under s. 790.06, F.S., *but* otherwise satisfies the criteria for receiving and maintaining such a license.⁵⁵

A person who carries a concealed weapon or concealed firearm without a license⁵⁶ must carry valid identification at all times when he or she is in actual possession of a concealed weapon or concealed firearm and must display such identification upon demand by a law enforcement officer.⁵⁷ The person must also abide by s. 790.06(12), F.S., in the same manner as a person who is licensed to carry a concealed weapon or concealed firearm.⁵⁸

⁴⁷ Section 921.0022(2), F.S.

⁴⁸ Felony offenses that are not listed in the OSRC default to statutorily assigned levels, as follows: an unlisted third degree felony defaults to a level 1; an unlisted second degree felony defaults to a level 4; an unlisted first degree felony defaults to a level 7; an unlisted first degree felony punishable by life defaults to a level 9; and an unlisted life felony defaults to a level 10. s. 921.0023, F.S.

⁴⁹ ss. 921.0022, F.S. and 921.0024, F.S.

⁵⁰ A person may also accumulate points for factors such as victim injury points, community sanction violation points, and certain sentencing multipliers. s. 921.0024(1), F.S.

⁵¹ If a person scores more than 44 points, the lowest permissible sentence is a specified term of months in state prison, determined by a formula. If a person scores 44 points or fewer, the court may impose a nonprison sanction, such as a county jail sentence, probation, or community control. s. 921.0024(2), F.S.

⁵² Section 790.06(1), F.S.

⁵³ *Id.*

⁵⁴ "Concealed weapon or firearm" as defined in s. 790.06, F.S., means a handgun, electric weapon or device, tear gas gun, knife, or billie, but does not include a machine gun as that term is defined in s. 790.001, F.S.

⁵⁵ Section 790.06(2)(a)-(f) and (i)-(n), (3), and (10), F.S.

⁵⁶ Section 790.01(1)(b), F.S.

⁵⁷ Section 790.013, F.S.

⁵⁸ Section 790.06(12)(a), F.S., lists the locations where a person is not authorized to openly carry a handgun (defined in s. 790.001(10), F.S. as a firearm capable of being carried and used by one hand, such as a pistol or revolver) or carry a concealed weapon or concealed firearm.

Limitations on the Concealed Carrying of a Firearm or Weapon for Licensees and Authorized Persons

Persons who hold a valid license to carry a concealed weapon or firearm are statutorily authorized to carry a handgun,⁵⁹ electronic weapon or device,⁶⁰ tear gas gun,⁶¹ knife,⁶² or billie in a concealed manner.⁶³

Section 790.06(12), F.S., sets forth the following limitations on the concealed carry statutory authorization. A license issued under this section does *not* authorize any person to openly carry a handgun or carry a concealed weapon or firearm into:

- Any place of nuisance as defined in s. 823.05, F.S.;
- Any police, sheriff, or highway patrol station;
- Any detention facility, prison, or jail;
- Any courthouse;
- Any courtroom, except that nothing in this section would preclude a judge from carrying a concealed weapon or determining who will carry a concealed weapon in his or her courtroom;
- Any polling place;
- Any meeting of the governing body of a county, public school district, municipality, or special district;
- Any meeting of the Legislature or a committee thereof;
- Any school, college, or professional athletic event not related to firearms;
- Any elementary or secondary school facility or administration building;
- Any career center;
- Any portion of an establishment licensed to dispense alcoholic beverages for consumption on the premises, which portion of the establishment is primarily devoted to such purpose;
- Any college or university facility unless the licensee is a registered student, employee, or faculty member of such college or university and the weapon is a stun gun or nonlethal electric weapon or device designed solely for defensive purposes and the weapon does not fire a dart or projectile;
- The inside of the passenger terminal and sterile area of any airport, provided that no person may be prohibited from carrying any legal firearm into the terminal, which firearm is encased for shipment for purposes of checking such firearm as baggage to be lawfully transported on any aircraft; or

⁵⁹ “Handgun” means a firearm capable of being carried and used by one hand, such as a pistol or revolver. s. 790.001(10), F.S.

⁶⁰ “Electric weapon or device” means any device which, through the application or use of electrical current, is designed, redesigned, used, or intended to be used for offensive or defensive purposes, the destruction of life, or the infliction of injury. s. 790.001(14), F.S.

⁶¹ “Tear gas gun” or “chemical weapon or device” means any weapon of such nature, except a device known as a “self-defense chemical spray.” “Self-defense chemical spray” means a device carried solely for purposes of lawful self-defense that is compact in size, designed to be carried on or about the person, and contains not more than two ounces of chemical. s. 790.001(3)(b), F.S.

⁶² “Knife” is defined as what it is *not* in s. 790.001(13), F.S.: “Weapon” means...or other deadly weapon *except...*a common pocketknife, plastic knife, or blunt-bladed table knife.

⁶³ Section 790.06(1), F.S.

- Any place where the carrying of firearms is prohibited by federal law.⁶⁴

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Safety and Security of Postsecondary Institutions (Section 8)

The bill creates s. 1006.601, F.S., relating to student safety. The new section provides:

- Authority to participate in the Chris Hixon, Coach Aaron Feis, and Coach Scott Beigel Guardian Program and appoint certified school guardians.
- Each public post secondary educational institution must:
 - Adopt an active assailant response plan including methods for issuing campus-wide alerts, and annual certification that all faculty, staff, and students have completed active assailant preparedness training.
 - Adopt, in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies and local government, a family reunification plan in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies and local government in case of manmade or natural disaster. Reunification plan requires annual review and update if necessary.
 - Train faculty to detect and respond to student mental health needs.
 - Post on its website a mental health awareness and suicide prevention sign.
 - Establish threat management teams to coordinate resources and assessment and intervention with students whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of the institution, institution staff, or students. Teams must utilize the statewide behavioral threat management operational process and Florida-specific behavioral threat assessment instrument developed by the Office of Safe Schools or another comparable tool deemed appropriate for postsecondary institutions.
- In collaboration with appropriate public safety agencies, annually conduct security risk assessments at each campus using the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool or a comparable tool deemed appropriate for postsecondary institutions by the State Board of Education and Board of Governors.

The bill provides rulemaking and regulation-adopting authority to The State Board of Education and the Board of Governors to implement s. 1006.601, F.S.

Training Provided by School Safety Specialist (Section 7)

The bill amends s. 1006.07, F.S., to provide that training provided by the school safety specialist for classroom teachers and other instructional staff must explain the purpose, importance, and proper execution of school safety protocols and emergency procedures.

⁶⁴ Section 790.06(12)(a), F.S.

Transferring Student Records to Public Postsecondary Institutions (Section 6)

Section 1003.25, F.S., is amended to require that a student's specified records follow such student to a Florida College System institution or state university should he or she enroll there.

Such records include verified reports of serious or recurrent behavior patterns and psychological evaluations.

Guardian Program in Public Postsecondary Institutions (Section 1)

The bill amends s. 30.15, F.S., to authorize local sheriffs to provide employees and faculty from the following institutions access to the Chris Hixon, Coach Aaron Feis, and Coach Scott Beigel school Guardian Program:

- Public postsecondary educational institutions;
- Workforce education;
- Florida College System Institutions;
- State universities; and
- All other state-supported postsecondary educational institutions.

Promoting the Use of FortifyFL within Public Postsecondary Institutions (Section 5)

The bill amends s. 943.082, F.S., to require public postsecondary educational institutions to be made aware of and promote the use of the mobile suspicious activity reporting tool (FortifyFL) by:

- Advertising it on the institution website,
- Installing it on all mobile devices issued by the institution, and
- Bookmarking the website on all computer devices maintained by the institution.

Exception to Prohibition of Firearms in any College or University Facility (Section 2)

The bill amends s. 790.06(12), F.S., to provide an exception from the prohibition against openly carrying a handgun or carrying a concealed weapon or concealed firearm into any college or university facility. The exception applies to:

- An employee or faculty member of such college or university who is not a registered student of such college or university; or
- A registered student of such college or university who is an employee or faculty member of the college or university. This provision applies to a registered student at times during which he or she is performing the duties of his or her position as an employee or faculty member of the college or university.

Discharging a Weapon or Firearm at or 1,000 Away from a School (Section 3 and 4)

The bill amends s. 790.115, F.S., to create a second degree felony offense if a person possesses any firearm, electric weapon or device, destructive device, or other weapon, including a razor blade or box cutter, except as authorized in support of school-sanctioned activities, at a school-sponsored event or on the property of any school, school bus, or school bus stop *and* he or she

discharges any weapon or firearm within 1,000 feet of a school, during school hours or during the time of a sanctioned school activity, unless discharged for lawful defense of himself or herself or another or for a lawful purpose.

This provision does not apply to the discharge of a weapon or firearm on private real property within 1,000 feet of a school by the owner of such property or by a person whose presence on such property has been authorized, licensed, or invited by the owner.

Additionally, as of October 1, 2026, when this bill section becomes effective, the new second degree felony offense is designated as Level 6 offense in the Criminal Punishment Code offense severity ranking chart.

The bill also provides that a person arrested for the new second degree felony, or the existing second degree felony of discharging a weapon while unlawfully possessing a weapon on school property must be held in custody until brought before the court for admittance to bail in accordance with ch. 903, F.S.

The bill takes effect upon becoming a law except for Sections 3 and 4 of the bill which take effect on October 1, 2026.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

The bill does not appear to require cities and counties to expend funds or limit their authority to raise authority to raise revenue or receive state-shared revenues as specified by Article VII, s. 18, of the State Constitution.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

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:

The FDLE expects \$189,812 fiscal impact to the Department, \$12,676 of which is nonrecurring funds. These expenditures relate to potential additional information reported to and maintained by the FDLE due to the expansion of the number of school guardians or school security guards that may result from the addition of public postsecondary educational institutions to the guardian program.⁶⁵

It appears that the public postsecondary educational institutions may incur costs attached to adopting and implementing s. 1006.601, F.S., the comprehensive plan for the safety and security of students, faculty, and staff of public postsecondary educational institutions provided for in the bill. Specifically, the educational institutions will be participating in reporting annual security risk assessments at each campus using the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool or a comparable tool, creating and updating active assailant response plans, and expanded mental health training and threat management processes at participating public colleges and universities.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 30.15, 790.06, 790.115, 921.0022, 943.082, 1003.25, 1006.07, 1006.601, 402.305, 790.013, 843.08, 943.03, 1001.212, 1006.12

IX. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

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

⁶⁵ 2026 FDLE Legislative Bill Analysis, January 27, 2026; on file with the Senate Criminal Justice Committee.