

Ohio Legislature Considers Adding Teeth To New Gun Law

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On March 21, [Ohio's new gun law went into effect](#) without a way to enforce it. The new law prevents employers from making or enforcing any policy that prohibits employees with concealed carry permits from storing firearms and ammunition in their locked cars on employer property. While this law spelled out employees' right to lock guns in their cars, it contained no enforcement mechanism and no clear penalty on employers who obstruct employees from exercising their right. Now the Ohio Senate is considering adding language to the law to enforce employees' right to lock guns in their cars at work. After the new gun law passed, the Senate first considered sweeping anti-employer language that would grant an aggrieved employee the right to file a civil action for compensatory damages, injunctive relief, attorney's fees and costs if a court held that an employer impeded an employee's right to lock a gun in his or her vehicle. However, on June 27, this language was narrowed by a conference committee, and the proposed language is far more employer-friendly. For instance, while the current proposal would still allow an employee to file a civil action, it takes compensatory damages, attorneys' fees and costs off the table and the employee would only be able to seek injunctive relief. The changes were passed out of the conference committee and have not yet come to a vote; they are not guaranteed to become law. In the meantime, employers can breathe a sigh of relief that the earlier, more extreme amendment language has been scaled back. The proposed enforcement mechanism is a good reminder to Ohio employers to consider revisiting their firearms policies to determine whether they unlawfully prohibit eligible employees from concealing guns in their locked vehicles.

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