

Ohio Employers May Soon See Employees Packing Heat In Their Cars

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Ohio employees with concealed carry licenses may soon be legally allowed to bring firearms onto their employers' property. Currently, Ohio law allows most private employers to ban firearms anywhere on their premises, including in their employees' locked vehicles in the parking lot. However, Senate Bill 199 would prevent employers from prohibiting concealed handgun license holders from storing firearms in their locked vehicles, even if those vehicles are on company property. Senate Bill 199 has passed through the legislature and is on its way to Ohio Gov. John Kasich's desk. No doubt many employers will lament the loss of control over firearms on their premises, should the bill be signed into law. Rest assured, though, employers: It could have been worse. Until last week, the legislature was considering a different version of the bill that would have made holding a concealed carry license a distinct protected class similar to race, sex and disability under the Ohio Civil Rights Act. Business owners would have been unable to discipline employees for bringing concealed firearms onto the premises and would have faced possible discrimination lawsuits for doing so. Pro-business organizations, such as the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and the Ohio Council of Retail Merchants, fought against that bill because it stripped business owners of the right to regulate their property. If Senate Bill 199 in its current form is signed into law, employers will still be able to ban firearms from their buildings and require they be kept locked in vehicles. Employers should consider reviewing their firearms policies to determine whether revisions would be necessary if the bill becomes law.

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