

Ohio House Passes Bill Weakening Employers' Ability To Restrict Guns On Property

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If it feels like I'm beating (or shooting) a dead horse with Ohio gun laws lately, it is because the [Ohio legislature keeps passing laws](#) that restrict employers' right to prohibit firearms in their workplaces. The newest bill, which passed out of the Ohio House on July 6, would eliminate criminal penalties for carrying a deadly weapon into a business that restricts them.

As the law currently stands, a business may post signage stating that firearms are prohibited on the property. If an individual knowingly violates this prohibition, he or she may be charged with criminal trespass. As such, employers have some leverage in prohibiting employees from bringing guns to work, as those employees may be convicted of a crime if they refuse to honor the prohibition. House Bill 233, however, cuts into this protection by proposing that a concealed carry licensee may carry a deadly weapon into a restricted space as long as he or she leaves when asked to do so. The licensee will not be charged with criminal trespass for violating the business's prohibition on guns unless he/she refuses to leave when specifically asked. As such, even if an employer prohibited firearms in the workplace, an employee could still bring a gun to work and would face no criminal penalties for doing so unless the employer specifically asked the employee to take the firearm off the premises and the employee refused.

Employers could still take disciplinary action against such an employee, but they would not be backed by the threat of criminal prosecution. The Ohio legislature has tended of late to pass laws that strengthen the rights of gun owners at the expense of employers and property owners who want the right to prohibit firearms from their property.

This trend is unsettling for employers who fear that the new laws make it easier for a disgruntled employee to walk into his/her workplace with a gun. It is not yet clear whether the Ohio Senate will pass the bill or whether Gov. John Kasich will sign it into law. Pro-employer groups such as the Ohio Chamber of Commerce have opposed the legislation because it is unnecessary and because it infringes on employers' rights, so there could still be a fight to pass the bill into law. As the Ohio legislature has been extremely active of late in considering guns-in-the-workplace laws, more news on this story is sure to follow.

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