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Boone gun law moves forward

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The Boone County Fiscal Court will go ahead with plans to allow citizens to carry concealed weapons into county buildings with certain exceptions.

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The issue was clarified further and a draft ordinance was discussed at its Oct. 5 meeting. A first reading could occur Oct. 22. Commissioners Charlie Kenner and Cathy Flaig were interested in moving forward. Judge-executive Gary Moore said he's leaning toward supporting it.

Under a draft ordinance, properly licensed citizens can carry concealed deadly weapons onto property owned or leased by the county with exceptions. Exceptions are county

facilities that house the Boone County commonwealth's attorney, Boone County attorney, Boone County child support program, Boone County sheriff and the Boone County jailer.

The county's current ordinance bans carrying concealed weapons into all buildings owned, leased or controlled by it, such as the Boone County Administration Building.

By state law, permitted residents are already allowed to carry concealed weapons into state or county parks, according to Boone County Attorney Robert Neace. The draft ordinance does not change that at all.

Moore said Florence resident Joe Kalil told the county he had a concern about the safety of the county's public buildings because of a sticker on a door that says no concealed weapons are allowed in the buildings. Moore said after Kalil brought the item up, he appointed a committee consisting of a representative of the sheriff's office, the county attorney's office, the judge-executive staff, himself and Kalil. Moore said the committee began to explore areas the ordinance covers, why it does so and what other options there might be.

"And Joe ... made a very good case as to why this needed to be revisited," he said.

Kalil, who owns Defensive Handgun Training, said the sign communicates to a criminal that no law-abiding citizens on the premises are capable of protecting themselves.

"So the sign ... does not protect you, it actually makes you more unsafe," he said.

Kalil is a Republican running unopposed in the Nov. 2 general election for Boone County constable, District 3. He said the issue does not benefit his company.

A person cannot bring a concealed firearm into a local government meeting or a General Assembly

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meeting unless they are a member of that body with a license to carry, according to Kentucky law.

Boone County Sheriff's Department spokesman Tom Scheben said in an e-mail "our experience has shown that those who take the time and expend the effort to acquire the carry concealed permits are law-abiding citizens."

As to whether a building is safer with licensed people being allowed to carry concealed firearms into it or if it is safer where it's not allowed, Scheben said "whether one would consider it safer or not is a matter of personal perspective. It could be argued either way. The sheriff (Michael Helmig) considers it a matter of personal freedom and not a public safety concern."

It's not known how many people in Boone County have concealed carry permits. The Community Recorder has requested that information from the Kentucky State Police.

Under state law, a concealed firearm can't be brought into any police station or sheriff's office, any detention facility, prison or jail, any courthouse, a part of an establishment that is licensed to dispense beer and alcohol for consumption on their premises, any elementary or secondary school facility without consent of school authorities, any child-care facility, any certified family child-care home unless it is by the residence's owner, an area of an airport where inspections take place and any place prohibited by federal law.

No one spoke in opposition during the meeting to the expansion of county-controlled places where licensed citizens can carry concealed weapons but others spoke in favor of it.

"Clearly our law enforcement officers can't be everywhere to protect us," Union resident Bryan Miller said. "That's why I firmly believe in the Second Amendment and my right to carry."

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