

## **NEWS:**

# **Bill Mandating Firearm Storage to Become Law**



**June 9, 2019** -- A controversial proposal will expand the scope of an existing gun storage statute.

[House Bill 63](#) broadens a state law that already requires gun owners to take steps to prevent their weapons from being easily accessible to minors.

The new law adds "unauthorized persons" (someone legally prohibited from possessing a firearm) to the statute.

Under the legislation, a person would be guilty of the "unsafe storage of a firearm" if he or she "intentionally or recklessly" stored or left a loaded firearm within easy access of a minor or unauthorized person.

The bill was amended in the Senate before passing the House for a second time on June 4<sup>th</sup>. The amendment places the onus on the state, requiring prosecutors to prove all of the following to secure a conviction:

- A firearm was not stored in a locked box or container.
- A firearm was not disabled with a properly engaged tamper-resistant trigger lock.
- A firearm was not stored in a location which a reasonable person would have believed to be secure.
- An unauthorized person did not obtain the firearm as the result of a burglary.

Under the legislation, a gun owner could be charged with a class A or class B misdemeanor for a violation. The more serious charge (class A) would apply if the person who obtained the gun used it in a crime or inflicted a serious injury.

The revised bill cleared the Senate 13 to 8. It passed the House, 22 to 19, on its first visit and 23 to 18 in its amended form.

While agreeing that gun owners have a duty to be responsible with their firearms, critics of the bill, including all 15 House Republicans, cited a long list of objections, not the least of which is that the severity of the charge against a gun owner is dependent on the actions of the person who stole the firearm.