

AN ACT

relating to certain offenses relating to carrying concealed handguns on property owned or leased by a governmental entity; providing a civil penalty.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 411.209 to read as follows:

Sec. 411.209. WRONGFUL EXCLUSION OF CONCEALED HANDGUN LICENSE HOLDER. (a) A state agency or a political subdivision of the state may not provide notice by a communication described by Section 30.06, Penal Code, or by any sign expressly referring to that law or to a concealed handgun license, that a license holder carrying a handgun under the authority of this subchapter is prohibited from entering or remaining on a premises or other place owned or leased by the governmental entity unless license holders are prohibited from carrying a handgun on the premises or other place by Section 46.03 or 46.035, Penal Code.

(b) A state agency or a political subdivision of the state that violates Subsection (a) is liable for a civil penalty of:

(1) not less than \$1,000 and not more than \$1,500 for the first violation; and

(2) not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$10,500 for the second or a subsequent violation.

(c) Each day of a continuing violation of Subsection (a)

1 constitutes a separate violation.

2 (d) A citizen of this state or a person licensed to carry a
3 concealed handgun under this subchapter may file a complaint with
4 the attorney general that a state agency or political subdivision
5 is in violation of Subsection (a) if the citizen or person provides
6 the agency or subdivision a written notice that describes the
7 violation and specific location of the sign found to be in violation
8 and the agency or subdivision does not cure the violation before the
9 end of the third business day after the date of receiving the
10 written notice. A complaint filed under this subsection must
11 include evidence of the violation and a copy of the written notice.

12 (e) A civil penalty collected by the attorney general under
13 this section shall be deposited to the credit of the compensation to
14 victims of crime fund established under Subchapter B, Chapter 56,
15 Code of Criminal Procedure.

16 (f) Before a suit may be brought against a state agency or a
17 political subdivision of the state for a violation of Subsection
18 (a), the attorney general must investigate the complaint to
19 determine whether legal action is warranted. If legal action is
20 warranted, the attorney general must give the chief administrative
21 officer of the agency or political subdivision charged with the
22 violation a written notice that:

23 (1) describes the violation and specific location of
24 the sign found to be in violation;

25 (2) states the amount of the proposed penalty for the
26 violation; and

27 (3) gives the agency or political subdivision 15 days

1 from receipt of the notice to remove the sign and cure the violation
2 to avoid the penalty, unless the agency or political subdivision
3 was found liable by a court for previously violating Subsection
4 (a).

5 (g) If the attorney general determines that legal action is
6 warranted and that the state agency or political subdivision has
7 not cured the violation within the 15-day period provided by
8 Subsection (f)(3), the attorney general or the appropriate county
9 or district attorney may sue to collect the civil penalty provided
10 by Subsection (b). The attorney general may also file a petition
11 for a writ of mandamus or apply for other appropriate equitable
12 relief. A suit or petition under this subsection may be filed in a
13 district court in Travis County or in a county in which the
14 principal office of the state agency or political subdivision is
15 located. The attorney general may recover reasonable expenses
16 incurred in obtaining relief under this subsection, including court
17 costs, reasonable attorney's fees, investigative costs, witness
18 fees, and deposition costs.

19 (h) Sovereign immunity to suit is waived and abolished to
20 the extent of liability created by this section.

21 SECTION 2. Section 46.035(c), Penal Code, is amended to
22 read as follows:

23 (c) A license holder commits an offense if the license
24 holder intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly carries a handgun
25 under the authority of Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code,
26 regardless of whether the handgun is concealed, in the room or rooms
27 where a [at any] meeting of a governmental entity is held and if the

1 meeting is an open meeting subject to Chapter 551, Government Code,
2 and the entity provided notice as required by that chapter.

3 SECTION 3. The change in law made by this Act in amending
4 Section 46.035(c), Penal Code, applies only to an offense committed
5 on or after the effective date of this Act. An offense committed
6 before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in
7 effect on the date the offense was committed, and the former law is
8 continued in effect for that purpose. For purposes of this section,
9 an offense was committed before the effective date of this Act if
10 any element of the offense occurred before that date.

11 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 273 passed the Senate on March 18, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 26, Nays 5.

Secretary of the Senate

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 273 passed the House on May 23, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 116, Nays 23, one present not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

Approved:

Date

Governor