



# HOUSE BILL 674: The Firearms Liberty Act.

2025-2026 General Assembly

<b>Committee:</b>	House Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	<b>Date:</b>	May 7, 2025
<b>Introduced by:</b>	Reps. Adams, Kidwell, Eddins, Carson Smith	<b>Prepared by:</b>	Susan Sitze
<b>Analysis of:</b>	Second Edition		Staff Attorney

## **OVERVIEW: House Bill 674 would make the following changes:**

- *Adding an option for a lifetime concealed handgun permit and related technical and conforming changes.*
- *Provide that a concealed handgun permittee who allowed the permit to lapse does not have to take another firearms safety and training course upon applying for renewal under certain conditions.*
- *Allow a person subject to a domestic violence protective order and an order to surrender firearms, to transfer storage of the firearms from the sheriff to a qualified licensed firearms dealer.*
- *Provide liability protection for safety hold agreements between federal firearms licensees and individual firearm owners.*
- *Authorize the storage and use of defensive devices in biometric safes for schools.*
- *Broaden door lock exemption for certain businesses.*

## **LIFETIME CONCEALED HANDGUN PERMITS (PART II)**

**CURRENT LAW:** Article 45B of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes establishes a process for obtaining a concealed handgun permit which authorizes an individual to carry a concealed handgun, subject to certain restrictions. Under G.S. 14-415.11, concealed handgun permits must be renewed every five years. When renewing permits, a person must file an affidavit that the person remains qualified to hold the permit and pay a renewal fee.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** Part II would amend Article 45B of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes by establishing two types of concealed handgun permits, fixed duration permits and lifetime permits, as follows:

- Fixed duration permits would be valid for five years.
- Lifetime permits would be valid statewide until surrendered or revoked.

Individuals could request either type of concealed carry permit. Those issued fixed duration permits would be required to renew by providing a renewal form and a renewal fee. A lifetime permit would not require renewal, but an individual could request reissuance of that permit as a fixed duration permit using the same renewal process, and pay a reissuance fee.

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Either permit could be revoked on the grounds the individual was no longer a resident of the State. When changing addresses, a permit holder would be required to notify the sheriff of the county in which the person resides, and that sheriff would be required to report that information to the statewide system of permit holders maintained by the State Bureau of Investigation.

Additional conforming and technical changes would be made to other statutes.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Part II would become effective December 1, 2025, and would apply to all permits issued or renewed after that date.

## **REVISE LAW ON LAPSE OF CONCEALED CARRY PERMIT (PART III)**

**CURRENT LAW:** Concealed handgun permits can be renewed in the 90 days prior to the expiration of the permit by completion of a renewal form and payment of a fee. If a permittee applies for renewal within those 90 days, the permit will remain valid past the expiration date until the permit is renewed or the renewal is denied. G.S. 14-415.16(e) currently provides that if a person does not apply for renewal prior to the expiration of the permit, but does apply within 60 days after expiration, the sheriff may waive the requirement of taking another firearms safety and training course. Applications for renewal made after the expiration of a permit do not extend the validity of the permit.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** Part III would amend G.S. 14-415.16(e) as follows:

- If the permittee applies for renewal less than 180 days after the expiration of the permit, the sheriff would be required to waive the requirement to take another firearm safety and training course.
- If the permittee applies for renewal between 180 days and one year after expiration, the sheriff may waive the requirement to take another firearm safety and training course.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Part III would become effective October 1, 2025, and apply to renewal applications submitted on or after that date.

## **PROPERTY PROTECTION/DVPO (PART IV)**

**CURRENT LAW:** G.S. 50B-3.1 authorizes a court to require a defendant to surrender all firearms when issuing an emergency or ex parte domestic violence protective order if certain factors are found. The firearms are currently stored by the sheriff, who may charge a reasonable fee for the storage.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** Part IV of the act would amend the procedures for the surrender and retrieval of firearms, when ordered by the court pursuant to an emergency or ex parte domestic violence protective order to make the following changes:

- Allow defendants to transfer the storage of firearms and ammunition to a federally licensed firearm dealer (FFL).
  - The FFL must operate a commercial establishment that is open to the public.
  - The transfer is not authorized until the firearms have been in the sheriff's custody for 15 days.
  - An FFL that accepts firearms and ammunition would be prohibited from transferring the firearms to the defendant unless the motion for a protective order is dismissed or the order of surrender has expired, or transferring the firearms to any person the FFL knows or

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reasonably should know will allow the defendant access to the firearms. Violation would be a Class 2 misdemeanor.

- If the firearms are transferred to an FFL, the sheriff may not charge a fee for the first 15 days of storage.
- Modify the procedure required for a defendant to retrieve the firearms upon expiration of the order or final disposition of any criminal charges.
  - Reduce the time allowed to request return of surrendered firearms to 30 days.
  - Allow the defendant to submit a written request to the sheriff or FFL holding the firearms, rather than requiring a court order in all cases.
  - The sheriff or FFL would be required to conduct a check of the defendant through the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS).
  - If the NICS check indicates grounds that would prevent the defendant from receiving the firearms, the sheriff or FFL would file a motion with the court.
  - Upon receipt of the motion, the court would schedule a hearing, which would be conducted in the same manner as current law provides.
- Authorize the court to allow an FFL to dispose of by sale any surrendered firearms that are not claimed.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Part IV would become effective December 1, 2025, and would apply to orders issued on or after that date.

## **LIABILITY PROTECTION FOR SAFETY HOLD AGREEMENTS (PART V)**

**BILL ANALYSIS:** Part V would enact a new G.S. 409.44, which would authorize a federal firearms licensee (FFL) to enter into a safety hold agreement with a firearm owner.

The statute would release the FFL from liability for any act or omission arising from the agreement that results in personal injury or death of any individual, including the return of any firearm to the individual firearm owner at the termination of the agreement. The immunity from liability would not apply to any action that is the result of negligent or reckless storage of the firearm or otherwise unlawful conduct on the part of the FFL.

The statute states that nothing should be construed to require an FFL to take possession of an unlawfully possessed firearm or to return a firearm to a person prohibited by law from possessing a firearm.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Part V would become effective July 1, 2025.

## **AUTHORIZE THE STORAGE AND USE OF DEFENSIVE DEVICES IN BIOMETRIC SAFES FOR SCHOOLS (PART VI)**

**CURRENT LAW:** G.S. 14-269.2 prohibits weapons on educational property except as specifically authorized.

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**BILL ANALYSIS:** Part VI would authorize non-lethal defensive devices in any public school unit or nonpublic school if those devices are stored in a locked container securely affixed to the premises and accessible by a biometric lock limiting access to only authorized employees with training for the classification of device stored in the container or to law enforcement officers.

Defensive devices authorized would include, but not be limited to, a disabling chemical spray, an electronic incapacitation device, or any other non-lethal device.

This Part would also make conforming changes to statutes prohibiting weapons on educational property and carrying a concealed weapon to authorize the defensive devices, the storage containers, and the possession of the devices by authorized personnel in response to a threatening situation.

The Center for Safer Schools, in collaboration with the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission, would have the duty to establish classifications of defensive devices and establish minimum training standards for school employees to qualify to access that classification of device.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** The provisions of Part VI authorizing the defensive devices and storage containers, as well as the possession of the devices would become effective January 1, 2026. The remainder of the Part would be effective when it becomes law.

## **BROADEN DOOR LOCK EXEMPTION FOR CERTAIN BUSINESSES (PART VII)**

**CURRENT LAW:** G.S. 143-143.4(a) currently exempts a business entity licensed to sell automatic weapons as a federal firearms dealer that is in the business of selling firearms or ammunition and that operates a firing range which rents firearms and sells ammunition from the door lock requirements of Chapter 10 of Volume 1 of the North Carolina State Building Code.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** Part VII would remove the requirement that the business entity operate a firing range which rents firearms and sells ammunition in order to qualify for the exemption.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Part VII would be effective when it becomes law.

**OVERALL EFFECTIVE DATE:** Except as otherwise provided above, the bill would be effective when it becomes law.

*\* Robert Ryan and Debbie Griffiths, Staff Attorneys, substantially contributed to this summary.*