



SECURE FLORIDA WORSHIP

SENATE BILL 52 BRIEF



About The Bill

Background:

There is no law in Florida prohibiting the carry of firearms at a religious institution. However, having a group of church members voluntarily organize and act as a security team for the congregation could put the volunteers and the church at significant risk. Under chapter 493, individuals who guard persons or property for consideration could be classified as security officers^[1] requiring Class D and G licensure. Church members who are currently performing security services without a license are doing so in a **legal gray area**.

As discussed in an article by the Law firm Katz & Phillips,^[2] the issue is not whether an individual may carry a weapon at church for his or her own protection. The issue is whether a group of volunteers may organize themselves, or be organized by the institution, to act as a private security entity and provide security services to a church without proper licensure, **even if uncompensated**. SB 52 is designed to address that issue by alleviating the need for these teams to seek licensure. The exception bridges the gap between an individual's right to carry and their ability to protect their congregation as part of an armed church security team.

^[1] Please see Florida Statute 493.6101 - [Chapter 493](#)

^[2] Volunteer Armed Church Security - [The Firearm Firm](#)

Why is SB 52 Needed?

The Family Research Council published a 2024 report^[3] documenting 415 hostile incidents against churches in the US^[4]. Florida was a leader in hostile incidents in 2024, with a total of 25 reported attacks. Horrific tragedies such as the recent church shooting in Grand Blanc, Michigan^[5], left 4 dead and 8 injured, highlighting the importance of church security.

Under the current Florida Statutes, if an armed volunteer church security team is organized, those volunteers could be considered as unlicensed security officers. Senate Bill 52 doesn't change carry laws, SB 52 simply clarifies that unpaid volunteers protecting their own church are exempt from Chapter 493 of the Florida State statutes

^[3] Please see - [Family Research Council Hostile Incident Report](#)

^[4] This included 55 arsons, 14 bomb threats, and 28 gun-related incidents.

^[5] Link - [FBI Publication - Grand Blanc Church Shooting](#).

Legal Explanation

Under Florida Statute Chapter 493, there's a significant gray area that hinders churches' ability to organize volunteer armed security teams. While §493.6102(13) exempts **unarmed individuals** employed as church security officers from licensing requirements, no explicit exemption exists for armed volunteers—even when they serve without any compensation. This ambiguity persists despite the passage of HB 259 (2021), which amended s. 790.06, F.S., to authorize a CWFL license holder to carry a concealed firearm for safety, security, and personal protection, on any property owned or rented by a church even if located on school property.^[6]

Church security volunteers could be deemed "security officers" if they receive any form of "consideration"—even non-monetary like training, shirts, or even a water bottle—triggering licensing needs under Chapter 493[7]. This exposes dedicated congregants to **potential fines, license revocations, and imprisonment**[8]. It discourages well-intentioned individuals, often retired law enforcement or military veterans, from volunteering their time to protect their congregations. This leaves our houses of worship vulnerable amid rising threats.

[6] See Analysis - [House Bill 259 Bill Analysis](#)

[7] See <https://thefirearmfirm.com/volunteer-armed-church-security/>

[8] Please see Florida Statute **493.6120 Violations; penalty.**—

Important Note



- The information in this brief is for general information purposes only. Nothing in this article should be taken as legal advice for any individual case or situation.

Conclusion

Congregations rely on volunteers to prioritize protecting their congregants' lives. SB 52 addresses a legal gray area by establishing a narrow exemption for “Any person who, on a voluntary basis and without compensation, provides armed security services on the premises of a church, mosque, synagogue, or other place of worship.”[9] For some churches, hiring professional officers or requiring members of their church security team to hold D and G licenses would create significant financial burdens, including extensive training costs, licensure fees, or contracts that many modest congregations cannot afford. This forces churches to forgo adequate security altogether. Due to the rise in violence towards Florida's faith communities[10], we are advocating for the right to respond proactively and lawfully to these emerging threats.

[9] See Bill Text - <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2026/52/BillText/c1/PDF>

[10] See <https://www.theviolenceproject.org/house-of-worship-homicides/>

Join the Cause!

Contact us!

Your public support is the foundation of this effort. If your church is interested in speaking at an upcoming committee hearing or waiving in support of SB 52 / HB 95, please email info@secureflworship.com Please include any questions you may have regarding its effect on your local church.

To see the latest developments on SB 52, please visit our website and subscribe at the link below:

Website: <https://secureflworship.com/>

Subscribe Link: [Subscribe to Secure FL Worship](#)

Additional Resources

For the latest version of SB 52, please click below:

- **Senate Bill:** [CS/SB 52: Security Services at Places of Worship](#)

See Katz & Phillips article regarding church security teams

- **Article:** <https://thefirearmfirm.com/volunteer-armed-church-security/>