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BILL: House Bill 760
TITLE: Handguns – School Employees Handgun Permits and Carrying Weapons on School Property
DATE: March 6, 2018
POSITION: Oppose
COMMITTEE: Judiciary
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House Bill 760 authorizes a county board to authorize school employees in the county board's school system to carry a handgun on school property only if the handgun is secured on the person's body; requiring the Secretary of State Police to issue a handgun permit to a person who is otherwise qualified and who is a school employee in a certain school system; etc.

PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 760.

Local superintendents firmly believe that all children have the right to live and learn in a safe and nurturing environment. We also firmly believe that the safety of our school-based staff and all students must remain a top priority. Every school system has policies in place providing for individual school and building safety plans. These plans include lockdown procedures, evacuations, drills and safety protocols, and personnel assignment, including resource officers. We also recognize the fact that school safety must be the joint responsibility of the State and local board of education, school staff, students, parents/guardians, local law enforcement and public safety officials, and the community-at-large. Finally, we are cognizant of the fact that more needs to be done to protect our most vulnerable teachers and students from the horrific shootings that have taken innocent lives and scarred our school communities for years to come.

However, we cannot make our schools armed fortresses. We cannot expect our teachers to bring guns into our schools and burden them with the overwhelming responsibility of taking action if an individual enters the school building armed with a gun or assault weapon. PSSAM believes a better course of action would be to significantly increase school safety funding, mental health services, community supports for youth, and the resources necessary to make real, sustainable changes. We also believe that increases in security and mental health must be above and beyond instructional programming and staffing.

For the reasons detailed above, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 760 and urges an unfavorable committee report.