

**2025 HOUSE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

**HB 1352**

# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1352

2/7/2025

A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact section 62.1-02-05 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to possession of firearms or dangerous weapons at a church or place of worship.

8:48 a.m. Chairman Porter opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Porter, Vice Chairman Anderson, Vice Chair Novak,  
Representatives: Dockter, Hagert, Headland, Heinert, Johnson, Marschall, J. Olson, Ruby,  
Conmy, Foss

### **Discussion Topics:**

- North Dakota firearm carry laws
- Churches within school buildings
- Religious rights

8:48 a.m. Representative Ben Koppelman, North Dakota Representative for District 16, introduced the bill and provided testimony #36171.

9:08 a.m. Brian Gosch, Lobbyist for the National Rifle Association of America, testified in favor.

9:13 a.m. Christopher Dodson, Co-Director and General Counsel for the North Dakota Catholic Conference, testified in opposition and provided testimony #36089.

### **Additional written testimony:**

Jane Schreck, Bismarck, North Dakota, submitted testimony in opposition #36078

Tessa Leiseth, Bishop for Eastern North Dakota Synod, submitted testimony in opposition #35989

Linda Sand, Fargo, North Dakota, submitted testimony in opposition #35476

Erin Price, Bismarck, North Dakota, submitted testimony in opposition #35343

Mary Sherman, West Fargo, North Dakota, submitted testimony in opposition #35337

9:17 a.m. Chairman Porter closed the hearing.

*Wyatt Armstrong for Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk*

My name is Mary Sherman and I have lived all my life in North Dakota. I'm writing an opposition to the bill that would prohibit, churches, Synagogues, and mosques from preventing guns in there sacred spaces. I really don't understand the North Dakota legislatures' obsession with gun laws. There are so many more important things that can be addressed. This kind of legislation violates the constitutional division of church and state. Additionally. It seems clear that the enacting of such laws could jeopardize the tax exempt status of places of worship.

In the Fargo forum those proposing this kind of law referred to the possession of guns as a God given right. As a Christian, I am offended by such a statement.

Gun violence in churches is a serious problem in the United States. It's become more common in recent years, with violence and hate crimes in places of worship increasing by nearly 35% between 2014 and 2018. People of nearly all religions have been murdered while practicing their faith. Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, and others have been impacted by the rise in gun violence.

Please consider not only the morality of such a law, but the facts and the legal ramifications. but the facts and the legal ramifications

Dear Members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing to express my **strong opposition to House Bill 1352**. As a local mother of a nearly 10-year-old son, I am deeply concerned about the safety of our community, especially in spaces that should be sanctuaries of peace, such as churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, and other places of worship. This bill would make public spaces less safe by stripping away the authority of these institutions to decide whether or not to allow firearms on their property. These places of worship, where families come together to seek solace, should have the right to make decisions to protect their children, youth, and adults from the potential danger of firearms in their sacred spaces.

Allowing firearms in places of worship is a threat to the safety and peace of these environments. There is no credible evidence that making firearms more accessible and present in these spaces will prevent gun violence. On the contrary, it increases the likelihood of tragic incidents, adding to the anxiety and fear of individuals who come to these spaces to seek spiritual nourishment, not to live in fear of gun violence.

As a mother, I am deeply concerned that this bill would create an environment in which parents may feel uncomfortable or unsafe bringing their children to services or events. If guns are allowed in our places of worship, families may be less inclined to attend. The presence of firearms in these spaces would undermine the very essence of these institutions, which are meant to be places of safety, peace, and community.

This bill undermines the ability of places of worship to make decisions that prioritize the well-being of their members. It is crucial that we allow these institutions to determine what is best for their communities, including how to protect them from unnecessary harm. We cannot allow this legislation to stand, as it will only make our public spaces less safe and diminish the trust and sense of security that families need to feel when they come together in faith.

I urge you to vote **against HB 1352** and protect the rights of places of worship to make decisions about the safety of their congregations.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Erin Price  
Bismarck, ND

My name is Linda Lee Sand. I live in Fargo. I strongly oppose HB 1352.

Thank you for taking my testimony.

HB 1352 infringes on our First Amendment right to freely worship without threat of armed intimidation. It would take the power away from faith leaders having a say in whether or not they want guns in their churches, synagogues or temples and handing this decision over to the state. It's a reckless proposal and threatens the sanctity of these sacred spaces. Nor does it make sense to put worshipers in danger. There is absolutely no evidence that the notion of flooding the country with guns will eliminate gun violence. We are an outlier in developed nations in terms of gun safety globally, with one of the highest rates of gun violence and firearm deaths per capita, placing us significantly lower in gun safety among our peers.

Let's be real, the only heat Jesus would be packing is the warmth of compassion and tolerance, the fire of love. The story about Jesus in the temple? He'd be overturning the tables. And this bill.

I urge you to give this bill a DO NOT PASS.

**House Energy and Natural Resources Committee****Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 1352****Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth****February 7, 2025**

Chairman Porter and members of this Committee, on behalf of the Eastern North Dakota Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, I am submitting testimony in opposition to House Bill 1352.

The current law allows an individual, who is authorized to carry a firearm or dangerous weapon in North Dakota, to possess such a weapon in a church building if authorized by the church's primary religious leader or the governing body of the church. Within the synod, the pastor or the congregation council could grant such authorization. It is a workable law that allows each congregation to determine who may possess concealed firearms or dangerous weapons in its church building.

If enacted, this bill would allow any individual, who is authorized to carry a concealed firearm or dangerous weapon North Dakota, to possess such concealed weapons in church buildings of the approximately 175 churches in the synod – even if a congregation would be opposed to any individual possessing any dangerous weapon with its building.

Essential to the concept of religious liberty, each congregation within the synod should have the right to ensure the safety of its members and should have the right to declare its church building a safe, weapons free zone.

Accordingly, I urge this Committee to vote a “do not pass” recommendation for House Bill 1352.

We need fewer guns in public, not more.



*Representing the Diocese of Fargo  
and the Diocese of Bismarck*

**To:** House Energy and Natural Resources  
**From:** Christopher T. Dodson - Co-Director  
**Subject:** HB 1352 - Possession of a Firearm at a Church  
**Date:** February 7, 2025

The North Dakota Catholic Conference opposes House Bill 1352.

Existing law allows an individual to have a firearm in a place of worship if the individual meets certain requirements and has permission from the church or place of worship. It is a workable law that does not negate the religious organization's fundamental right to define their sacred spaces. House Bill 1352 destroys that carefully designed compromise and tosses aside the religious rights of places of worship.

Essential to religious liberty is the recognition that churches and other places of worship have a fundamental right to create, design, and exercise autonomy of their religious spaces. Government interference with that right would likely not withstand a legal challenge.

Some religious bodies do not have a problem with firearms in places of worship. To others, the very idea is blasphemous. Others fall somewhere in between. The existing law respects the varying religious views on the matter. It allows an individual to possess a firearm at a place of worship if the place of worship gives approval.

Frankly, the only reason for enacting HB 1352 would be to appease individuals who do not have the courtesy to ask for approval or to respect the decision of the place or worship if approval is not given. This is a poor reason for infringing on religious freedom and subjecting the state to litigation.

We urge this committee to give HB 1352 a **Do Not Pass** recommendation.

103 South Third Street  
Suite 10  
Bismarck ND 58501  
701-223-2519  
ndcatholic.org  
ndcatholic@ndcatholic.org



25.0506.02000

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

## HOUSE BILL NO. 1352

Introduced by

Representatives Koppelman, Kasper, Marschall, M. Ruby, Vetter, Louser

Senators Boehm, Castaneda, Clemens, Cory, Meyer

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 62.1-02 of the North Dakota  
2 Century Code, relating to exemption from liability for public and private entities; and to amend  
3 and reenact section 62.1-02-05 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to possession of  
4 firearms or dangerous weapons at a church or place of worship.

### 5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

6 **SECTION 1.** A new section to chapter 62.1-02 of the North Dakota Century Code is created  
7 and enacted as follows:

8 ~~Exemption from liability for public and private entities.~~

9 ~~Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a public or private entity may not be held liable~~  
10 ~~for any injury or death or damage to property caused by an individual permitted to carry a~~  
11 ~~dangerous weapon concealed under this chapter.~~

12 **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Section 62.1-02-05 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
13 amended and reenacted as follows:

14 **62.1-02-05. Possession of a firearm or dangerous weapon at a public gathering -**  
15 **Penalty - Application.**

- 16 1. An individual may not possess a firearm or dangerous weapon at:
- 17 a. A school or school-sponsored event on school property; or
- 18 b. ~~A church or other place of worship; or~~
- 19 c. A publicly owned or operated building.
- 20 2. This section does not apply to:
- 21 a. A law enforcement officer, or a correctional officer employed by the department of
- 22 corrections and rehabilitation or by a correctional facility governed by chapter
- 23 12-44.1. A correctional officer employed by the department of corrections and
- 24 rehabilitation may carry a firearm only as authorized in section 12-47-34. A

- 1                   correctional officer employed by a correctional facility governed by chapter  
2                   12-44.1 may carry a firearm or dangerous weapon only as authorized in section  
3                   12-44.1-30;
- 4           b.   An individual who is on an ambulance or firefighter crew while the individual is on  
5           duty if:
- 6               (1)   The individual has written permission from the governing body or owner of  
7               the fire department or ambulance service;
- 8               (2)   The individual possesses a valid class 1 concealed weapons license;
- 9               (3)   The individual has successfully completed a weapons training course  
10              developed by the North Dakota private investigative and security board; and
- 11              (4)   The governing body or owner of the fire department or ambulance crew  
12              provides written notice to the bureau of criminal investigation of the  
13              individuals authorized or no longer authorized to carry a firearm or  
14              dangerous weapon under this section, including that all training and  
15              certification requirements have been satisfied;
- 16           c.   A member of the armed forces of the United States or national guard, organized  
17           reserves, state defense forces, or state guard organizations, when on duty;
- 18           d.   A competitor participating in an organized sport shooting event;
- 19           e.   A gun or antique show;
- 20           f.   A participant using a blank cartridge firearm at a sporting or theatrical event;
- 21           g.   A firearm or dangerous weapon carried in a temporary residence or motor  
22           vehicle;
- 23           h.   A student and an instructor at a hunter safety class;
- 24           i.   Private and public security personnel while on duty;
- 25           j.   A state or federal park;
- 26           k.   An instructor, a test administrator, an official, or a participant in educational,  
27           training, cultural, or competitive events involving the authorized use of a  
28           dangerous weapon if the event occurs with permission of the person or entity  
29           with authority over the function or premises in question;
- 30           l.   An individual in a publicly owned or operated rest area or restroom;

- 1           m. ~~An individual who is authorized under section 62.1-04-02 to carry a firearm or~~  
2           ~~dangerous weapon concealed or who has reciprocity under section 62.1-04-03.1~~  
3           ~~authorizing the individual to carry a firearm or dangerous weapon concealed if~~  
4           ~~the individual is in a church building or other place of worship and the primary~~  
5           ~~religious leader or the governing body of the church or other place of worship~~  
6           ~~approves the individual or group of individuals to carry a firearm or dangerous~~  
7           ~~weapon through a policy or any other means;~~
- 8           n. A state, federal, or municipal court judge, a district court magistrate judge or  
9           judicial referee, and a staff member of the office of attorney general if the  
10          individual maintains the same level of firearms proficiency as is required by the  
11          peace officer standards and training board for law enforcement officers. A local  
12          law enforcement agency shall issue a certificate of compliance under this section  
13          to an individual who is proficient;
- 14          e.n. An individual's storage of a firearm or dangerous weapon in a building that is  
15          owned or managed by the state or a political subdivision, provided:  
16               (1) The individual resides in the building;  
17               (2) The storage is inside the individual's assigned residential unit; and  
18               (3) The storage has been consented to by the state, the governing board, or a  
19               designee; and
- 20          p.o. An individual authorized to carry a concealed weapon on school property under  
21          section 62.1-02-14.
- 22          3. This section does not prevent any political subdivision from enacting an ordinance that  
23          is less restrictive than this section relating to the possession of firearms or dangerous  
24          weapons at a public gathering. An enacted ordinance supersedes this section within  
25          the jurisdiction of the political subdivision.
- 26          4. ~~Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a church or place of worship may not be~~  
27          ~~held liable for any injury or death or damage to property caused by an individual~~  
28          ~~permitted to carry a dangerous weapon concealed under this section.~~
- 29          5. This section does not prevent the governing body of a school or the entity exercising  
30          control over a publicly owned or operated building or property from authorizing the use

- 1 of a less than lethal weapon as part of the security plan for the school, building, or
- 2 property.
- 3 ~~6-5.~~ An individual who knowingly violates this section is guilty of an infraction.

# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1352  
2/14/2025  
Subcommittee

Relating to possession of firearms or dangerous weapons at a church or place of worship.
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9:36 a.m. Chairman Heinert called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Heinert, Representatives Dockter, Hagert, Conmy

### Discussion Topics:

- Committee recommendation

9:38 a.m. Representative Conmy moved a Do Not Pass recommendation to full committee.

9:38 a.m. Representative Hagert seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: Motion Passed

9:39 a.m. Chairman Heinert closed the hearing.

*Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk*

# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1352

2/20/2025

Relating to possession of firearms or dangerous weapons at a church or place of worship.
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11:20 a.m. Chairman Porter called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Porter, Vice Chairman Anderson, Vice Chair Novak,  
Representatives: Dockter, Hagert, Headland, Heinert, Johnson, Marschall, Olson, Conmy,  
Foss

Members Absent: Representative M. Ruby

### Discussion Topics:

- Committee Action

11:20 a.m. Representative Heinert moved to adopt amendment previous testimony #36171.

11:21 a.m. Representative Johnson seconded the motion.

Voice vote: Motion carried

11:21 a.m. Representative Heinert moved a Do Not Pass and amended.

11:21 a.m. Representative Hagert seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Todd Porter	Y
Representative Dick Anderson	Y
Representative Anna Novak	N
Representative Liz Conmy	Y
Representative Jason Dockter	Y
Representative Austin Foss	Y
Representative Jared c. Hagert	Y
Representative Craig Headland	Y
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Jorin Johnson	N
Representative Andrew Marschall	N
Representative Jeremy L. Olson	Y
Representative Matthew Ruby	AB

Motion carried: 9-3-1

Bill carrier: Representative Heinert

House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

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11:23 a.m. Chairman Porter closed the hearing.

*Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk*



February 21, 2025

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1352**

Introduced by

Representatives Koppelman, Kasper, Marschall, M. Ruby, Vetter, Louser

Senators Boehm, Castaneda, Clemens, Cory, Meyer

2-21-25  
Jmz 1024

1 A BILL for an Act ~~to create and enact a new section to chapter 62.1-02 of the North Dakota~~  
2 ~~Century Code, relating to exemption from liability for public and private entities; and to amend~~  
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15 **Penalty - Application.**

16 1. An individual may not possess a firearm or dangerous weapon at:

17 a. A school or school-sponsored event on school property; or

18 b. ~~A church or other place of worship; or~~

19 e. A publicly owned or operated building.

20 2. This section does not apply to:



8/23/2014

- a. A law enforcement officer, or a correctional officer employed by the department of corrections and rehabilitation or by a correctional facility governed by chapter 12-44.1. A correctional officer employed by the department of corrections and rehabilitation may carry a firearm only as authorized in section 12-47-34. A correctional officer employed by a correctional facility governed by chapter 12-44.1 may carry a firearm or dangerous weapon only as authorized in section 12-44.1-30;
- b. An individual who is on an ambulance or firefighter crew while the individual is on duty if:
  - (1) The individual has written permission from the governing body or owner of the fire department or ambulance service;
  - (2) The individual possesses a valid class 1 concealed weapons license;
  - (3) The individual has successfully completed a weapons training course developed by the North Dakota private investigative and security board; and
  - (4) The governing body or owner of the fire department or ambulance crew provides written notice to the bureau of criminal investigation of the individuals authorized or no longer authorized to carry a firearm or dangerous weapon under this section, including that all training and certification requirements have been satisfied;
- c. A member of the armed forces of the United States or national guard, organized reserves, state defense forces, or state guard organizations, when on duty;
- d. A competitor participating in an organized sport shooting event;
- e. A gun or antique show;
- f. A participant using a blank cartridge firearm at a sporting or theatrical event;
- g. A firearm or dangerous weapon carried in a temporary residence or motor vehicle;
- h. A student and an instructor at a hunter safety class;
- i. Private and public security personnel while on duty;
- j. A state or federal park;
- k. An instructor, a test administrator, an official, or a participant in educational, training, cultural, or competitive events involving the authorized use of a

JB 3064

1 dangerous weapon if the event occurs with permission of the person or entity  
2 with authority over the function or premises in question;

3 l. An individual in a publicly owned or operated rest area or restroom;

4 m. ~~An individual who is authorized under section 62.1-04-02 to carry a firearm or~~  
5 ~~dangerous weapon concealed or who has reciprocity under section 62.1-04-03.1~~  
6 ~~authorizing the individual to carry a firearm or dangerous weapon concealed if~~  
7 ~~the individual is in a church building or other place of worship and the primary~~  
8 ~~religious leader or the governing body of the church or other place of worship~~  
9 ~~approves the individual or group of individuals to carry a firearm or dangerous~~  
10 ~~weapon through a policy or any other means;~~

11 n. A state, federal, or municipal court judge, a district court magistrate judge or  
12 judicial referee, and a staff member of the office of attorney general if the  
13 individual maintains the same level of firearms proficiency as is required by the  
14 peace officer standards and training board for law enforcement officers. A local  
15 law enforcement agency shall issue a certificate of compliance under this section  
16 to an individual who is proficient;

17 ~~o.n.~~ An individual's storage of a firearm or dangerous weapon in a building that is  
18 owned or managed by the state or a political subdivision, provided:

19 (1) The individual resides in the building;

20 (2) The storage is inside the individual's assigned residential unit; and

21 (3) The storage has been consented to by the state, the governing board, or a  
22 designee; and

23 ~~p.o.~~ An individual authorized to carry a concealed weapon on school property under  
24 section 62.1-02-14.

25 3. This section does not prevent any political subdivision from enacting an ordinance that  
26 is less restrictive than this section relating to the possession of firearms or dangerous  
27 weapons at a public gathering. An enacted ordinance supersedes this section within  
28 the jurisdiction of the political subdivision.

29 4. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a church or place of worship may not be  
30 held liable for any injury or death or damage to property caused by an individual  
31 permitted to carry a dangerous weapon concealed under this section.

AB 424

- 1 | 5. This section does not prevent the governing body of a school or the entity exercising
- 2 | control over a publicly owned or operated building or property from authorizing the use
- 3 | of a less than lethal weapon as part of the security plan for the school, building, or
- 4 | property.
- 5 | ~~6.5.~~ An individual who knowingly violates this section is guilty of an infraction.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE  
HB 1352**

**Energy and Natural Resources Committee (Rep. Porter, Chairman)** recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.0506.02001](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO NOT PASS** (9 YEAS, 3 NAYS, 1 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1352 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.