

Pistols for Pastors?

Concerned churchgoers are asking a loaded question: Can pastors pack heat? The answer depends on where you worship. But the question—being spurred by an increase in headlines about church shootings—has some state legislatures fired up. Virginia passed a law in April ruling self-defense a “good and sufficient” reason to carry handguns during a church service. Georgia’s Senate just approved a law that lets churches decide if they want to let members of the congregation carry concealed weapons, and Arkansas pastors could allow guns in church under a proposed bill.

Ironically though, if you attend church in Texas—a state notorious for its Second Amendment support—arriving armed on Sundays could land you behind bars.

“The laws in Texas are quite specific about the legality of carrying firearms in churches as a part of the increasingly popular ‘security teams,’” says Chuck Chadwick, former security director for Ed Young’s Fellowship Church. “You can’t just get Bubba-Joe with his concealed handgun license to ride herd over the flock. Actually, it is illegal and can earn the pistol-packer a class-A misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in jail and a \$10,000 fine.”