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**The Virginian-Pilot**

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THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT  
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DATE: Wednesday, February 8, 1995 TAG: 9502080513  
SECTION: LOCAL PAGE: B3 EDITION: FINAL  
SOURCE: BY ROBERT LITTLE AND DAVID M. POOLE, STAFF WRITER  
DATELINE: RICHMOND LENGTH: Medium: 95 lines

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## SENATE VOTES 24-16 TO RELAX RULES FOR WEAPONS PERMITS

The Senate approved a measure Tuesday that would prohibit judges from denying concealed weapon permits unless applicants are felons, drunks, drug abusers or other misfits.

The bill must clear the House of Delegates, where it is expected to face considerable opposition.

Under current law, applicants for concealed weapon permits must show they are of good character and prove they have a need to carry a weapon for protection.

Supporters of the proposal say many judges are too picky and only grant permits to applicants such as government officials or former police officers.

"There are a lot of law-abiding citizens who can't get permits because of unfettered discretion and discrimination," said Sen. Virgil H. Goode Jr., D-Rocky Mount. He and Sen. Kenneth W. Stolle, R-Virginia Beach, sponsored versions of the same legislation - SB 744 and SB 793, respectively.

The proposal passed with a comfortable margin, 24-16, but several senators insisted the bill would simply put more guns on the street and lead to an increase in violent crime.

"Any respectable drug dealer who wants to get himself a respectable bodyguard with no record can have a concealed weapon," said Sen. Richard L. Saslaw, D-Fairfax.

Only one concealed weapon permit was issued in Fairfax County over the last year and a half. In more rural areas, hundreds have been issued over the same period.

All Hampton Roads Republicans - Stolle, Mark L. Earley of Chesapeake, Thomas K. Norment Jr. of Williamsburg and the Eastern Shore and Frederick M. Quayle of Chesapeake - voted for the measure. So did Democrats Clarence A. Holland of Virginia Beach and Richard J. Holland of Isle of Wight.

Southside Democrats Yvonne B. Miller of Norfolk, L. Louise Lucas of Portsmouth and Stanley C. Walker of Norfolk voted against it.

The losers were less than gracious in defeat.

``It's gonna let a whole bunch of Rambos feel self-important," objected Democrat Madison E. Marye of Montgomery County.

``We're going to give a permit to every Tom, Dick and Harry that hasn't been convicted of a felony - every nutcake in Virginia," said Sen. Richard L. Saslaw, D-Fairfax.

The Senate met in a marathon eight-hour session Tuesday, considering hundreds of bills and resolutions on the last day to consider proposals introduced in the chamber this year.

Among other approved proposals was one calling for a constitutional amendment to let governors serve two terms, not just one. Virginia is the only state in the country in which the governor cannot succeed him- or herself, said Senate Majority Leader Hunter B. Andrews, D-Hampton.

The measure, which passed the chamber 22-18, would have to be approved by a statewide referendum. It would not affect Gov. George F. Allen or his successor.

A bill designed to end state-mandated monopolies on local phone services passed the Senate 38-1 with no debate. When signed by the governor, as expected, the bill would take effect Jan. 1, and would allow companies to compete with local telephone companies like Bell Atlantic. An identical version had passed the House of Delegates. Parental notification clears House, 54-44

Parental notification legislation cleared the House but not before opponents helped lessen proposed restrictions on juveniles seeking abortions.

The House voted 54-44 to allow girls to notify a grandparent or a sibling over 21 before seeking the procedure. The watered-down bill then passed, 79-20.

Lawmakers who support parental notification complain that the bill - HB 1420 - is a sham that would give pregnant teens any number of ways to get around notifying their parents before seeking an abortion.

But supporters say loopholes - such as allowing a judge to grant permission if an abortion is deemed to be in a teen's best interest - recognize the realities of broken or dysfunctional families.

The bill faces an uncertain future in the Senate. Allen supports parental notification, but he vetoed a similar measure last year because he said it was not an ``honest" notification bill.

In other action, the House:

Voted 69-30 to approve legislation that would give industries that find environmental problems on their own immunity from civil litigation. The Senate approved a similar bill Monday.

Approved civil fines of up to \$500 for parents who do not cooperate with school efforts to enforce disciplinary rules on their children.

Approved a bill sponsored by Virginia Beach Del. Frank W. Wagner that would allow parents to opt their children into random drug and alcohol screening at schools.

Agreed to let voters decide in a November referendum whether to borrow \$31 million to build prisons.

Rejected a bill that would have allowed Roanoke's City Council to enact an ordinance banning handguns

in city parks. The measure, targeted for defeat by the National Rifle Association, fell five votes short.

KEYWORDS: GENERAL ASSEMBLY GUN CONTROL LAWS