

(HB1977)

GOVERNOR'S VETO

Pursuant to Article V, Section 6 of the Constitution of Virginia, I veto House Bill 1977, which would have made possessing or transporting firearms or other weapons in a hospital providing mental health services a Class 1 misdemeanor.

While this version of the bill attempts to address several of my concerns from last year such as exemptions for public safety and security officers within the roles of their official duties and increased definitions of weapons to avoid some of the unintended consequences, the fact remains that this legislation is unnecessary.

Current law prohibits firearms in state-owned or operated hospitals prohibiting firearms or explosives on-premises, while private hospitals already possess the authority to ban firearms, with violators subject to trespassing penalties. The proposal also removes a hospital's discretion to permit employees to carry stun guns for safety.

Increased investments in behavioral mental health are vital to increasing public safety and the wellbeing of Virginians. However, increasing unnecessary restrictions on law abiding citizen's right to protect themselves has yet to be proven to accomplish this goal.

Accordingly, I veto this bill.