



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on March 23, 2026

Virginia Lawmakers Remove Self-exemption From Gun-storage Bill Following Public Backlash

In mid-March, [citizen journalists](#) drew widespread attention to firearm-related language in a draft version of [Virginia House Bill 110](#) (HB 110). [Social-media posts](#) highlighted a provision in a conference committee substitute that appeared to create a limited exception for members of the Virginia General Assembly regarding the storage of handguns in unattended vehicles.

The Legislation

Democratic Delegate Amy Laufer says she introduced HB 110 to [focus on firearm safety in vehicles](#). The bill would prohibit leaving a visible handgun in an unattended motor vehicle on public property. Violations would be subject to a civil penalty in order to reduce firearm thefts from cars — an issue that has received increasing attention.



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During the legislative process, the bill moved through both chambers of the General Assembly, with each adopting versions that were later reconciled through a conference committee. It was in one such conference substitute that the controversial language reportedly appeared. According to [widely shared excerpts](#), the provision would have [exempted members of the General Assembly](#) from the restriction under specific circumstances, such as when parking in designated legislative parking facilities.

Critics argue that the verbiage suggests unequal treatment. Some Republican lawmakers also voiced concerns about creating exemptions for elected officials, emphasizing that members of Virginia's part-time "[citizen legislature](#)" should be subject to the same rules as the general public. However, legislative records indicate that the final version of HB 110 approved by both chambers did not include any exemption for General Assembly members. The conference report ultimately adopted by the House of Delegates and the Senate applied the vehicle-storage restrictions uniformly, without carve-outs for legislators.

Good for Republicans

Drawing attention to the perceived hypocrisy may have [helped Republicans](#), who subsequently showed surprising resilience and overperformance in a March 17 House of Delegates District 98 contest. It was called after the death of longtime Republican Delegate Barry Knight. GOP candidate C. Andrew Rice (a Virginia Beach deputy commonwealth's attorney) defeated Democrat Cheryl Smith with 7,316 votes (62.46 percent) to her 4,392 (37.50 percent). More than 11,700 ballots were cast, a turnout of roughly 18 percent. This improved on Knight's 2025 margin of 56.6 percent in the same district, bucking a broader trend of Democratic gains since the 2025 statewide sweep. Election analysts noted the strong



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GOP showing, which has been viewed as a morale boost for Republicans and a counter to recent Democratic special-election momentum in the state.

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