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Gun-brandishing bill goes to Senate

The House voted 33-26 Wednesday to allow people to draw their firearms if they feel threatened without fearing arrest.

Current law potentially subjects those who brandish a gun to criminal charges. HB 2629 is aimed at providing some legal protections to those who unholster a weapon in an effort to ward off someone they believe is threatening them.

It also would permit pointing the firearm at someone else and even firing it if otherwise justified by law.

Rep. Tom Chabin, D-Flag-staff, who voted against the bill, said the legislation is opposed by police. The measure now goes to the Senate.

Teacher exams

Teachers would be able to instruct classes in specific subjects without having to pass the proficiency exam under the terms of legislation approved Wednesday by the House.

HB 2564 would create an exemption for any teacher who could produce a college transcript showing at least 24 credit hours in the subject.

Rep. John Kavanagh, R-Fountain Hills, said he understands the need to have more specialty teachers. But he said having 24 credit hours doesn't prove proficiency, as the person could have earned Cs and Ds in those courses.

And Rep. Rich Crandall, R-Mesa, said that's like allowing someone to practice law without passing the bar exam simply because he or she completed certain courses in law school. The bill now goes to the Senate.

Voluntary taxes

Arizonans who want to make voluntary donations to the state on their tax forms appear to be out of luck.

On a 28-31 vote, the House refused to give final approval to a proposal by Rep. Judy Burges, R-Skull Valley, putting a spot on income-tax forms for donations to the "I Didn't Pay Enough" fund. She said there are people willing to help deal with the state's deficit.

But several Republicans joined with Democrats to kill the measure.

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