

Tennessee Bans Guns in Churches Where School Children are Present

According to a new opinion from the Tennessee Attorney General, people can't bring guns to a church, religious entity or private school, even if it is private property, if that property is being used for a school event.

"Under the (law), the statute pertains to property being operated or while in use by any school. The statute does not exclude property of religious institutions or any particular type of school, including parochial schools, from its scope,"

Herbert Slatery, Tennessee Attorney General

The opinion is the latest in a series of questions about Tennessee gun laws in the wake of a state legislative push for new firearms bills, including the new guns-in-parks measure. Private and parochial schools or churches that allow the usage of certain buildings for school activities must ban guns on the property while it is being used by a school. Guns are specifically not allowed within the actual facility or area being used for the school activity.

For example, according to the Attorney General, if a private school were using church grounds to hold a festival encompassing the entire church property, gun possession would be prohibited on the entire grounds. However, if the school were using only a discrete and separate building on church grounds, other portions of the church's property might not fall within the scope of (the law)."

Attorney General Slatery did note however, that the gun ban did not apply to private property being used for home schooling purposes.

No doubt other states have taken notice of this latest development and may choose to follow suit in their states. If so it may mean churches and schools in your state may have to consider making changes to current security practices if they want to avoid violating the law.

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