

2019 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 483

BY REPRESENTATIVE GARY CARTER

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

WEAPONS/FIREARMS: Provides for the seizure of firearms from persons who pose a risk of imminent injury to self or others

1 AN ACT

2 To enact Code of Criminal Procedure Article 168, relative to the seizure of firearms; to  
3 provide relative to the seizure of firearms from persons who make threats of  
4 violence; to provide for the issuance of a warrant authorizing the search and seizure  
5 of any firearm of any person when certain circumstances exist; to provide for the  
6 grounds for which the warrant may be issued; to provide procedures for the  
7 application for and the issuance and execution of the warrant; to provide for a  
8 hearing; to provide for the burden of proof; to provide for the factors the court is  
9 required and authorized to consider in making its determination; to provide certain  
10 requirements upon a court's finding that a person poses a risk of imminent harm; to  
11 provide for the issuance of an order prohibiting the person from possessing a firearm;  
12 to provide for the modification, termination, or extension of the order; to provide for  
13 the reporting of information to the National Instant Criminal Background Check  
14 System database; to provide for the return of the firearm upon termination or  
15 expiration of the order; to provide for the procedure by which the seized firearms  
16 may be transferred to another person who is eligible to possess them; and to provide  
17 for related matters.

18 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

19 Section 1. Code of Criminal Procedure Article 168 is hereby enacted to read as  
20 follows:

1        Art. 168. Seizure of firearms from person posing risk of imminent harm

2            A. Upon petition to a district court by any district attorney or assistant  
3        district attorney or by any two peace officers, the court may issue a warrant  
4        authorizing the search for and seizure of any firearm from any person when the  
5        petitioner has probable cause to believe all of the following:

6            (1) The person poses a risk of imminent personal injury to himself or to  
7        another person.

8            (2) The person owns and possesses one or more firearms.

9            (3) The firearm or firearms are either within or upon a specified place, thing,  
10       or person.

11           B. The district attorney, assistant district attorney, or peace officers who seek  
12       to petition the court pursuant to the provisions of this Article, shall not do so unless  
13       the district attorney, assistant district attorney, or peace officers have conducted an  
14       independent investigation and have determined that the probable cause set forth in  
15       Paragraph A of this Article exists and that there is no reasonable alternative available  
16       to prevent the person from causing imminent personal injury to himself or to others  
17       with such firearm.

18           C. The court may issue a warrant pursuant to the provisions of this Article  
19       only upon the sworn affidavit of the petitioner before the court that includes the facts  
20       establishing the grounds for the issuance of the warrant.

21           D.(1) In determining whether the grounds for the petition exist or whether  
22       there is probable cause to believe that the grounds exist, the court shall consider the  
23       following:

24           (a) Recent threats or acts of violence by the person directed toward another  
25       person or persons.

26           (b) Recent threats or acts of violence by the person directed toward himself.

27           (c) Recent acts of cruelty to animals, as defined by R.S. 14:102 and 102.1,  
28       committed by such person.

1           (2) In evaluating whether any recent threats or acts or violence constitute  
2           probable cause to believe that the person poses a risk of imminent personal injury to  
3           himself or to another person or persons, the court may consider other factors  
4           including but not limited to the following:

5           (a) The reckless use, display, or brandishing of a firearm by the person.

6           (b) A history of the use, attempted used, or threatened use of physical force  
7           by the person against another person or persons.

8           (c) Prior involuntary admission of the person to a treatment facility, as  
9           defined in R.S. 28:2, for persons with mental illness or substance-related or addictive  
10          disorders.

11          (d) The illegal use of controlled dangerous substances or abuse of alcohol  
12          by the person.

13          (3) If the court is satisfied that the grounds for the petition exist or that there  
14          is probable cause to believe that they exist, the court shall issue a warrant naming or  
15          describing the person, place, or thing to be searched. The warrant shall be directed  
16          to any peace officer and shall state the grounds or probable cause for its issuance,  
17          and it shall command the peace officer to search within a reasonable time the person,  
18          place, or thing named for any and all firearms and to seize any firearms found upon  
19          the person, place, or thing named in the warrant. A copy of the warrant shall be  
20          given to the person named in the warrant together with a notice informing the person  
21          that he has the right to a hearing under this Article and the right to be represented by  
22          counsel at such hearing.

23          E. The petitioner shall file a copy of the petition for the warrant and all  
24          affidavits upon which the warrant is based with the clerk of court for the district  
25          court of the judicial district in which the search will be conducted no later than the  
26          next business day following the execution of the warrant. Prior to the execution and  
27          return of the warrant, the clerk of the court shall not disclose any information  
28          pertaining to the petition for the warrant or any affidavits upon which the warrant is  
29          based. The warrant shall be executed and returned with reasonable promptness

1 consistent with due process of law and shall be accompanied by a written inventory  
2 of all firearms seized.

3 F.(1) No later than seven days after the execution of the warrant pursuant to  
4 the provisions of this Article, the district court for the judicial district where the  
5 person named in the warrant resides shall hold a hearing to determine whether the  
6 seized firearms should be returned to the person named in the warrant or should  
7 continue to be held by the state.

8 (2) At the hearing, the state shall have the burden of proving all material  
9 facts by clear and convincing evidence.

10 (3)(a) If, after the hearing, the court finds by clear and convincing evidence  
11 that the person poses a risk of imminent personal injury to himself or to another  
12 person or persons, the court shall order that the firearm or firearms seized pursuant  
13 to the warrant continue to be held by the state and shall issue an order prohibiting the  
14 person from possessing the seized firearm or firearms, or any other firearms, for a  
15 period of time not to exceed one year. The court shall report the name and other  
16 identifying information of the person to the Louisiana Supreme Court for reporting  
17 to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System database pursuant to  
18 R.S. 13:753. Upon expiration or termination of the order, the court shall inform the  
19 Louisiana Supreme Court who shall cause the record to be removed from the  
20 National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

21 (b) At any time prior to the expiration of the period of time the person is  
22 prohibited from possessing a firearm pursuant to the provisions of this Subparagraph,  
23 but no more than once annually, the person subject to the order may file a motion to  
24 modify the effective period of the prohibition. Upon proof, by clear and convincing  
25 evidence, that the person no longer poses a risk of imminent personal injury to  
26 himself or to another person or persons the court may terminate the order and, upon  
27 confirming that a person is not otherwise prohibited from possessing firearms by any  
28 state or federal law, shall order any firearms seized returned to the person within  
29 forty-eight hours.

1           (4) If the court does not find, by clear and convincing evidence, that the  
2           person poses a risk of imminent personal injury to himself or to another person or  
3           persons, the court shall order the seized firearm or firearms be immediately returned  
4           to the person named in the warrant within forty-eight hours.

5           (5) Upon a finding that the person poses a risk of imminent personal injury  
6           to himself or to another person or persons, the court shall provide notice to the  
7           Louisiana Department of Health, office of behavioral health which may take action  
8           pursuant to Title 28 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950 as it deems  
9           appropriate.

10           (6) At any time prior to thirty days before the order ends, any two law  
11           enforcement officers or the district attorney or assistant district attorney may by  
12           motion request to extend the order issued pursuant to Subparagraph (F)(3) of this  
13           Article. Upon receiving a motion to extend, the court shall schedule a hearing to be  
14           held no later than fourteen days after receiving the motion. A copy of the hearing  
15           notice shall be given to the person named in the order together with a notice  
16           informing the person that he has the right to a hearing under this Article and the right  
17           to be represented by counsel at such hearing. If at the hearing, the court finds by  
18           clear and convincing evidence that the person continues to pose a risk of imminent  
19           personal injury to himself or to another person or persons, the court shall extend the  
20           order for a period not to exceed one year.

21           G.(1) No later than thirty days prior to the expiration of the order prohibiting  
22           the person from possessing a firearm or the extension of such order pursuant to the  
23           provisions of this Paragraph, the district attorney, assistant district attorney, or peace  
24           officers may petition the court to extend the order prohibiting the possession of  
25           firearms by the person if the district attorney, assistant district attorney, or peace  
26           officers have probable cause to believe that the person continues to pose a risk of  
27           imminent personal injury to himself or to another person.

28           (2) Taking into consideration the factors set forth in Paragraph D of this  
29           Article, if the court finds that there is probable cause to believe that the grounds for

1 the petition exist, the court shall set a contradictory hearing to be held not later than  
2 fourteen days prior to the expiration of the period of time the person is prohibited  
3 from possessing a firearm.

4 (3) If, after the hearing, the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that  
5 the person continues to pose a risk of imminent personal injury to himself or to  
6 another person or persons, the court shall order that the order prohibiting the person  
7 from possessing a firearm be extended for an additional period of time not to exceed  
8 six months. The court shall report the extension of the order to the Louisiana  
9 Supreme Court for reporting to the National Instant Criminal Background Check  
10 System database pursuant to R.S. 13:753.

11 H.(1) Upon expiration of the order, and if the court does not extend the order  
12 pursuant to Paragraph G of this Article, the person subject to the order may request  
13 that the court issue an order directing that the seized firearm or firearms be  
14 immediately returned to the person whose firearm or firearms were seized. A copy  
15 of such order shall be given to the person and to the law enforcement agency with  
16 possession of the seized firearm or firearms. Upon receipt of the order by the law  
17 enforcement agency, or upon presentation of the order by the person to the law  
18 enforcement agency, the seized firearm or firearms shall immediately be returned to  
19 the person pursuant to the order.

20 (2) Upon termination of the order by the court pursuant to Subparagraph  
21 (F)(3) of this Article, the court shall order that the seized firearm or firearms be  
22 immediately returned to the person whose firearm or firearms were seized. A copy  
23 of such order shall be given to the person and to the law enforcement agency with  
24 possession of the seized firearm or firearms. Upon receipt of the order by the law  
25 enforcement agency, or upon presentation of the order by the person to the law  
26 enforcement agency, the seized firearm or firearms shall immediately be returned to  
27 the person pursuant to the order. The court shall also immediately report the  
28 termination of the order to the Louisiana Supreme Court for the purpose of reporting  
29 to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System database that the court's

1 order prohibiting the person from possessing any firearm issued pursuant to the  
2 provisions of this Article has terminated and the record should be removed from the  
3 database pursuant to 25 CFR 25.9.

4 I. Any person whose firearm or firearms have been ordered seized pursuant  
5 to the provisions of this Article, including the legal owner of such firearms, or such  
6 person's legal representative, may seek to transfer such firearm or firearms in  
7 accordance with the provisions of state or federal law, to a person who is eligible to  
8 possess such firearm or firearms. Upon notification in writing by the person, or the  
9 person's legal representative, and the transferee, the head of the state agency holding  
10 the seized firearm or firearms shall within five days deliver the firearm or firearms  
11 to the transferee, provided that any person taking possession of the firearms shall  
12 certify in writing that they will not cause or allow the firearms to be accessed or  
13 controlled by the person subject to an order issued under Paragraph F of this Article.

14 J. Except as otherwise provided by this Article, the provisions of Title IV of  
15 the Louisiana Code of Criminal Procedure relative to the application, issuance, and  
16 execution of search warrants and to the receipt and custody of seized property shall  
17 apply.

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DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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HB 483 Original

2019 Regular Session

Gary Carter

**Abstract:** Provides for the issuance of a warrant for the search for and seizure of any firearm from a person who poses a risk of imminent personal injury to himself or to others.

Proposed law authorizes a district attorney or assistant district attorney or any two peace officers to petition the court for the issuance of a warrant for the search for and seizure of any firearm from any person when the petitioner has probable cause to believe all of the following:

- (1) That the person poses a risk of imminent personal injury to himself or to another person.
- (2) That the person possesses one or more firearms.
- (3) The firearm or firearms are either within or upon a specified place, thing, or person.

Proposed law provides as follows with regard to the procedures for the application for and issuance of the warrant:

- (1) Prohibits the filing of a petition until the district attorney, assistant district attorney, or peace officers have conducted an independent investigation and have determined that there is such probable cause and that there is no reasonable alternative available to prevent the imminent harm.
- (2) Requires the court to consider certain factors in making its determination including any of the person's recent threats or acts of violence to himself or others and recent acts of cruelty to animals.
- (3) Authorizes the court to consider additional factors in making its determination, including but not limited to the following: the reckless use, display, or brandishing of a firearm by the person; the history of the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force by the person against another person or persons; prior involuntary admission of the person to a treatment facility for persons with mental illness or substance-related or addictive disorders; and the illegal use of controlled dangerous substances or abuse of alcohol by the person.

If the court is satisfied that the grounds for the petition exist or that there is probable cause to believe that they exist, proposed law requires the court to issue a warrant, directed to any peace officer, naming or describing the person, place, or thing to be searched and the grounds or probable cause for its issuance. Proposed law further requires the warrant to be executed and returned with reasonable promptness consistent with due process of law and to be accompanied by a written inventory of all firearms seized.

Proposed law provides that a copy of the warrant shall be given to the person named in the warrant together with a notice informing the person that he has the right to a hearing, which shall occur no later than seven days after the execution of the warrant, to determine whether the seized firearms should be returned to him. Proposed law provides that at the hearing, the state shall have the burden of proving all material facts by clear and convincing evidence.

If, after the hearing, the court determines that the person poses a risk of imminent personal injury to himself or to another person or persons, proposed law provides that the court shall do all of the following:

- (1) Order that the firearm or firearms seized pursuant to the warrant continue to be held by the state.
- (2) Issue an order prohibiting the person from possessing the seized firearm or firearms, or any other firearms, for a period of time not to exceed one year. In this regard, proposed law provides that at any time prior to the expiration of the order, but no more than once annually, the person subject to the order may file a motion to modify the effective period of the prohibition. Upon proof, by clear and convincing evidence, that the person no longer poses a risk of imminent personal injury to himself or to another person or persons, the court shall order the firearms returned to the person within 48 hours, if the person is not otherwise prohibited from possessing a firearm under state or federal law.
- (3) Report the name and other identifying information of the person to the La. Supreme Court for reporting to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) database pursuant to present law (R.S. 13:753) which requires courts to report such information. Upon expiration of the order, the court is required to inform the La. Supreme Court who shall cause the record to be removed from the NICS database.

- (4) Give notice to the La. Dept. of Health, office of behavioral health to take appropriate action.

Proposed law further provides that at any time prior to 30 days before the order ends, any two law enforcement officers or the district attorney or assistant district attorney may request to extend the order. Upon receiving a motion to extend, the court shall schedule a hearing to be held no later than 14 days after receiving the motion. A copy of the hearing notice shall be given to the person named in the order. If at the hearing, the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the person continues to pose a risk of imminent personal injury to himself or to another person or persons, the court shall extend the order for a period not to exceed one year.

Proposed law provides for a procedure by which the seized firearms may be transferred to another person who is eligible to possess them, provided that the person taking possession of the firearms shall certify that they will not cause or allow the firearms to be accessed or controlled by the person subject to the order.

(Adds C.Cr.P. Art. 168)