

American Knife & Tool Institute
Executive Committee Meeting (BOR & Advisory)
Teleconference Call Tuesday, October 17, 2006 1:00 p.m. Eastern

The Executive Committee Teleconference meeting of the American Knife and Tool Institute on Tuesday, October 17, 2006 was called to order at 1:00 p.m. EDT by AKTI President Mike Jones (Gerber). Other Regents present: Les de Asis (Benchmade), Jeff Goddard (Kershaw), Gil Hibben (Knifemakers Guild). Others present: Jan Billeb, Executive Director; David Kowalski, Communications Coordinator; Dan Lawson, Attorney, Preston Bynum, Consultant. Regents absent: CJ Buck (Buck Knives), Tom Arrowsmith, (W.R. Case), A. G. Russell and Goldie Russell (A.G. Russell Knives) (provided proxy to David Kowalski). Other absent: AKTI Vice President David Hall (United).

The subject of the teleconference: Arkansas Legislative Effort and Retaining Lobbyist

David Kowalski introduced Preston Bynum and asked him to do an overview of the Arkansas legislation. Bynum explained that the Arkansas legislature meets only every two years and will begin the second Monday in January. At the end of the session it will be difficult to get anything accomplished because of budget arguments. While bills can be pre-filed, he does not recommend that approach and feels the best avenue for success is to maintain a low profile. Bynum's suggested strategy is to introduce the bill in the Senate. If it passes the Senate, it will go to the House of Representatives and then on to the Governor for signature. He noted that the governor's position is open for election and it is expected to be an extremely close contest (one of the candidates is Asa Hutchinson, with whom A.G. Russell has had previous positive contacts). The Senate bill would go through the Judicial Committee. Senator Jerry Taylor, SE Arkansas, who is on the committee, is willing to be a potential sponsor.

The Arkansas statute proposed for changes is:

Statute 5-73-121. Person carrying knives provides:

- a) A person who carries a knife as a weapon, except when upon a journey or upon his own premises, shall be punished as provided by 5-73-123(b).
- b) If a person carries a knife with a blade three and one-half inches (3 ½") long or longer, this fact shall be prima facie proof that the knife is carried as a weapon.
- c) This section does not apply to officers whose duties include making arrests or keeping and guarding prisoners, nor to persons summoned by the officers to aid in the discharge of their duties while actually engaged in the discharge of their duties.

Bynum recommended that amending by striking Section (b) would be the least disruptive method and the strategy most likely to be effective.

Kowalski questioned whether the amending strategy should also look at revising Section (a) by introducing additional language of "when engaged in a lawful business-related or recreational activity." Lawson recommended against changing Section (a) because it would put a burden on potential defendants to prove that they are engaged in a lawful activity. Bynum was open to cleaning up Section (a) because it refers to Section (b). He suggested AKTI keep the language as simple as possible and that we would have input during the initial drafting process.

Bynum indicated that he wants to be reasonably assured that it can be accomplished prior to taking on a task, so he has had preliminary conversations with key persons, in addition to the bill sponsor. He has spoken to the Prosecuting Attorney's Association president (they will not oppose it in any way). Scott Henderson, State Game and Fish Department, indicated he didn't know it was on the books and said he would not oppose it: in fact, he may want to come and testify on behalf of suggested revisions to help protect hunters and fishermen. The Director of State Police takes the position that they will not oppose the suggested revision. Bynum feels those are the key people who would make a difference. He still wants to talk to the municipal Police Commissioner (a "friend" of his) to assure they are in a neutral position as well.

Kowalski opened for additional questions. Dan Lawson asked about draftsmanship. Preston will draft and send the proposed bill to AKTI for distribution. Kowalski asked about introduction procedure. Bynum noted that companion bills are discouraged so the plan will be to introduce at the Senate first. If introduced within two weeks of the legislature convening, Bynum expects a scheduled hearing but warned there is often not a lot of advance notice.

Bynum noted his only concern regarding passage would be whether new members in the House (who are expected to number about 40 and many of whom are trial lawyers by profession) might take this up as "cause" for opposition. Assignments for committees will be made approximately Nov. 15th in both House and Senate.

Kowalski noted that A. G. Russell and Goldie Russell would potentially be available to attend hearings, as well as possibly other members of the Executive Committee.

Bynum disclosed the current list of clients he represents and indicated that he felt there was no conflict of interest.

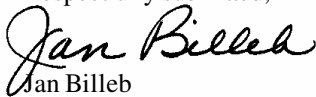
Kowalski thanked Bynum for his participation and dismissed him from the call.

Kowalski then asked if there were any questions, thoughts or concerns. Kowalski asked whether anyone believed that because this law had been largely ignored for thirty years that AKTI should continue to ignore it, as well. Dan Lawson noted that successful revision would get AKTI on the scoreboard for achievements. AKTI would also potentially have rescued untold numbers of individual knife owners (and knife sellers) from potential prosecution.

Mike Jones moved to accept Bynum's agreement for services at \$2,500 per month beginning November 1st, 2006 and ending February 28, 2007 with the fee capped at \$10,000. Seconded by Les de Asis, carried unanimously.

Les de Asis moved to adjourn, seconded by Jeff Goddard. Meeting adjourned 1:35 p.m. Eastern.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jan Billeb".

Jan Billeb
AKTI Executive Director