

# Bill would cut fee to carry gun in pocket

*RACHEL O'NEAL, ARKANSAS DEMOCRATGAZETTE*

Rep. Gunner DeLay, R-Fort Smith, is trying to cut in half the fee for applying for a permit to carry a concealed weapon. He's doing it so more people will apply, he said Tuesday. DeLay is lead sponsor of House Bill 1322, which would reduce the \$100 fee to \$50. He delayed House Revenue and Taxation Committee consideration of the bill Tuesday so he can gather more information. Col. John Bailey, director of the Arkansas State Police, opposes the bill because it would reduce revenue derived from handling the concealed weapon permit applications. In 1995, the state set up a system for Arkansans to obtain permits to carry concealed weapons. State police spokesman Wayne Jordan said about 10,900 permits have been issued. Few have been denied, he said. DeLay said he believes the money raised by the fees exceeds the costs. A lower fee would enable more Arkansans to apply, he said. Neither Jordan nor Kim Arnall, the staff member at the Bureau of Legislative Research who is helping DeLay gather information on the bill, could say how much it costs to administer the program. Last year, the applications brought in \$834,981. The applications are handled by the state police's special services division, which also administers other regulatory permits. Last year, the division spent \$1.4 million and brought in \$1.39 million in permit fees, which included the concealed-weapon application fees, Arnall said.