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UNDOCUMENTED LAWYER



'An act of justice' undone?

Trailblazing migrant lawyer got his chance from state lawmakers. Now, GOP wants the door closed.

John Kennedy
Capital Bureau | USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

TALLAHASSEE — Born in Mexico and a licensed lawyer in Florida, Jose Godinez-Samperio could prove both to be the first and among the last of his kind.

Godinez-Samperio began his career as an immigration lawyer, helping people legally enter the U.S., only after the Republican-controlled Legislature in 2014 passed a law allowing undocumented residents to be admitted to the Florida Bar.

The measure was overwhelmingly supported by GOP lawmakers. Then-House Speaker Will Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel, called it an "act of justice," after the legislation was approved 79-37 by the House.

It was signed by then-Gov. Rick Scott, now a Republican U.S. senator.

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ABOVE: Jose Manuel Godinez-Samperio graduated from New College of Florida in 2008 with a bachelor of arts degree in anthropology. Here, he receives a handshake from former Gov. Bob Graham, left, after receiving his New College diploma. SARASOTA HERALD TRIBUNE FILE

TOP: Godinez-Samperio flashes a thumbs-up to the Republican-controlled Florida House in 2014 after members voted to support his bid to practice law, even though he is not a U.S. citizen. SCOTT KEELER/THE TAMPA BAY TIMES VIA AP

Americans go to Europe in search of the good life — on the cheap

Expats gush about vibrant cities, but the locals feel squeezed out

Ronda Kaysen
The New York Times

LISBON, Portugal — Ben Mitas sipped Vinho Verde from a stemmed wineglass while he watched his daughter play on a swing one afternoon in January. He had bought the wine from a quiosque, the ubiquitous park kiosks, a luxury of living in Lisbon.

Mitas and his wife, Megan, moved to Portugal from Florida in 2019, renting a four-bedroom apartment for

2,500 euros (or about \$2,700) a month in Campo de Ourique, a quiet neighborhood with small shops and restaurants. Last year, they bought a 19th-century house in Lapa, a historic neighborhood perched high above the river, with embassies and 18th-century palaces and mansions with tiled facades, that they will renovate into their "forever home," said Megan Mitas, 31.

Ben Mitas, 40, a mortgage broker, travels back to Florida frequently for work, but their life is in Lisbon where their two small children are in pre-K and day care.

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State House votes to nix 'permission slip' for guns

Measure dramatically eases rules to get a concealed-carry license

James Call
Tallahassee Democrat
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

Gun rights advocates passed a major milestone Friday in their drive to get a permitless carry bill to Gov. Ron DeSantis for his signature.

The Florida House approved HB 543 on a mostly party line 76-32 vote, with one Republican, Rep. Vicki Lopez of Miami voting with 31 Democrats in opposition.

The measure, and its Senate companion, SB 150, does away with background checks, training, and fees for a concealed-carry weapons license. The Department of Agriculture has issued more than 2.66 million CWLs.

"This bill simply allows Floridians to conceal carry without red tape and expense. Florida will not come between you and your freedom to protect yourself anymore," said Rep. Chuck Brannon, R-Macclenny, who has sponsored the measure the past two sessions.

Brannon and his allies criticized the licensing process as having to pay for a "government permission slip" to exercise a constitutional right to protect oneself and one's family.

"A constitutional God-given right endowed by our creator," explained Rep. Adam Botana, R-Naples, with a reference to the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Democrats argued supporters twist the Second Amendment into a "dangerous concept."

Rep. Michelle K. Rayner-Goolsby, D-Tampa, added that whenever lawmakers discuss gun laws "everyone becomes a YouTube lawyer."

"The right of the people to keep and bear arms (shall) not be infringed does not mean that you're not registering it. Does not mean there are no rules and guardrails ... This is insanity," said Rayner-Goolsby.

Earlier, Rep. Dan Daley, D-Sunrise, told the Tallahassee Democrat the bill's supporters talk a lot about the constitution, "but they must have read only the CliffsNotes version."

Daley, a corporate lawyer and CWL holder, noted in debate on the House floor that more than 7,600 CWL applicants were denied by the state in 2021.

"Think about that for a second. That's 7,600 more guns on the street because they are not going to know

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