



FACT SHEET

Have Gun, Will Travel: Mandated National Concealed-Carry Legislation

February 2015

A proposal before Congress **mandating national concealed-carry reciprocity** would override existing state laws and force every state to honor concealed-carry permits issued by any other state. States have made choices regarding which individuals should be permitted to carry guns within their borders, and in many cases, have imposed strict requirements to ensure that both potentially dangerous individuals and those who have not received proper firearms safety training are not able to carry guns.

Mandating reciprocity would undermine the efforts of individual states and would lower concealed-carry permitting down to the standards of the states with the weakest permitting schemes, putting citizens of those states and law enforcement at risk.

Mandated national concealed-carry legislation will endanger public safety in three ways

- **It would be a race to the bottom.** States with the weakest requirements for allowing people to carry concealed, loaded guns will set the national standard for such permits.
- **It overrides state efforts to protect public safety.** Individual states will be unable to control who is authorized to carry a concealed gun within its borders because it will be required to honor permits issued by any other state.
- **It puts police and the public in danger.** Law enforcement will be unable to quickly determine whether an armed individual from out-of-state holds a valid concealed-carry license.

The determination regarding who is eligible to carry concealed guns is made by each individual state, and 46 states have enacted laws requiring a permit to carry concealed, loaded guns in the community. Yet, state laws on eligibility vary widely—some states have enacted strict eligibility and training requirements and give law enforcement the discretion to consider an applicant’s entire criminal history, while other states impose few restrictions on who can carry a concealed gun.

“National concealed carry reciprocity would severely undermine state concealed carry licensing systems ... national concealed carry reciprocity would create potentially life-threatening situations for law enforcement officers.”¹

— Jim Johnson, Baltimore County, Maryland police chief and chair of the National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence

“Ambiguity to the legality of firearm possession could lead to confusion among police officers that could result in catastrophic incidences. Congress should be working to make the job of a police officer more safe, not less.”²

— Hubert Williams, president of the Police Foundation

Many states have weak standards for issuing concealed-carry permits:

10

At least 10 states will issue a permit without first requiring some form of firearms safety training.³

10

At least 10 states will issue permits to people convicted of violent misdemeanor crimes.⁴

19

At least 19 states will allow people with a demonstrated history of drug or alcohol abuse to carry guns.⁵

Weak laws and permitting systems in a number of states have allowed dangerous people to carry concealed guns, often with tragic results

722—according to media reports, the number of people since 2007 who have been shot and killed by someone legally permitted to carry a concealed gun.⁶

1,400—the number of felons who were issued concealed-carry permits by Florida in 2007.⁷

2,400—the number of concealed-carry permits issued from 2007–2011 by North Carolina to people convicted of misdemeanor crimes or felonies.⁸

George Zimmerman, a cautionary example

George Zimmerman has an extensive history of violence and run-ins with police—both before and after he fatally shot unarmed teenager Trayvon Martin in 2012—that includes assaulting a police officer, four incidents involving domestic violence, and a road rage incident that involved threatening the other driver.⁹ Yet, despite this history, Zimmerman is still eligible to carry concealed, loaded guns under Florida's weak concealed-carry permitting laws. If Congress mandates national concealed carry, every state will be required to allow individuals like Zimmerman to carry guns within their borders.

For more information, visit <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/guns-crime/view/>.

Endnotes

1 Letter from Jim Johnson, police chief of Baltimore County, Maryland, to members of Congress, April 15, 2013, available at <http://lepartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/LEPartnership-4-15-National-Concealed-Carry-Letter.pdf>.

2 Letter from Hubert Williams, president of the Police Foundation, to Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX), July 6, 2011, available at <http://cloudfront.mediamattersaction.org/static/pdfs/police-foundation-letter.pdf>.

3 CAP analysis of state laws.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Violence Policy Center, "Total People Killed by Concealed Carry Killers May 2007 to the Present" (2015), available at http://www.vpc.org/fact_sht/cwtotalkilled.pdf.

7 Megan O'Matz and John Maines, "License to Carry: Florida's Flawed Concealed Weapon Law," *Sun Sentinel*, January 28, 2007, available at [http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2007-01-](http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2007-01-28/news/0701270316_1_gun-licensing-system)

[28/news/0701270316_1_gun-licensing-system](http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2007-01-28/news/0701270316_1_gun-licensing-system).

8 Michael Luo, "Guns in Public, and Out of Sight," *The New York Times*, December 26, 2011, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/27/us/more-concealed-guns-and-some-are-in-the-wrong-hands.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

9 Greg Botelho and Carma Hassan, "George Zimmerman arrested on suspected domestic violence," CNN, January 13, 2015, available at <http://www.cnn.com/2015/01/10/us/george-zimmerman-arrested/index.html>; NBC News, "Zimmerman accused of domestic violence, fighting with a police officer," March 27, 2012, available at http://usnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2012/03/27/10894561-zimmerman-accused-of-domestic-violence-fighting-with-a-policeofficer?lite; CBS4 Miami, "Police: George Zimmerman named in Florida road rage incident," September 12, 2014, available at <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/george-zimmermannamed-in-florida-road-rage-incident/>; Richard Luscombe, "George Zimmermann domestic violence charges dropped," *The Guardian*, December 11, 2013, available at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/12/george-zimmermandomestic-violence-charges-dropped>.

National law enforcement organizations that oppose mandated concealed-carry legislation:

- National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence
- Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc.
- Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association
- International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators
- International Association of Chiefs of Police
- Major Cities Chiefs Association
- National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives
- National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives
- Police Executive Research Forum
- Police Foundation