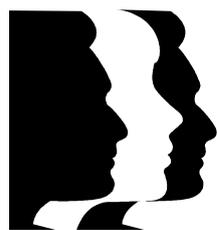


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State Abolishes Gun Permit Law

Arizona enacts legislation to restore Second Amendment gun rights to its citizens

by Ashley Murphy

It seems state lawmakers, not just citizens groups, are now beginning to honor the intent of the US Constitution, Bill of Rights and the freedoms they guarantee the people of the United States of America. Once again, a state is challenging the federal government by allowing its citizens to enjoy rights the Founding Fathers insisted they should have.

Arizona has now joined two

other states, Alaska and Vermont, that allow its people to carry a concealed weapon without requiring a permit, a right gun freedom advocates have argued for years is guaranteed to them.

In mid-April of this year, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer (R) signed into law a bill that made this action possible. Brewer stated, "I believe this legislation not only protects the Second Amendment rights of Arizona citizens, but restores those rights as

well."

The bill carries mixed feelings, bringing both supporters and critics. Supporters say that it promotes constitutional rights and allows people to protect themselves. Critics voiced that it will lead to unnecessary shootings.

Some police officials believe the bill will lead to more accidental gun discharges and accidental shootings, due to carriers also not being required to undertake proper training. Others, including police

unions representing rank-and-file officers supported the bill based on their belief that their allies out in the public are law-abiding citizens and are equipped with the knowledge to protect themselves, and if needed, their fellow citizen.

From a different standpoint; with support for the bill, but not foregoing training, the Arizona Citizens Defense League is a gun-rights group who have supported passage of constitutional carry laws, but believe that training should be received even if opting for the carry without permit right. A statement released by the group read, "The heaviest thing about wearing a firearm is the responsibility that comes with it."

Tennessee is one of 45 states that allow concealed carry with the issuance of a permit. Currently, Tennessee is a shall-issue jurisdiction state, which differs slightly from a may-issue jurisdiction that some other states follow. Shall issue refers to the granting of such a permit is subject only to meeting certain criteria laid out in the law, yet the granting authority has no discretion in the awarding of permits. If all criteria are met, then the granting authority "shall" issue the permit. May-issue refers to the permit being granted partially at the discretion of local authorities. Various criteria must then be met and the granting authority "may" issue the permit to an individual.

The People News contacted Tennessee State Representative (Bradley County) Eric Watson, to inquire if any such bill has been in the works for Tennessee to forgo the permit process for concealed carry. Watson stated in his responding e-mail, "As far as I'm aware, there has been no move in recent years to disband the permit process and in fact, there have

been moves (some successful, others not) to make it more restrictive."

Written in 1796 and amended in 1870 to it's final form, the Tennessee Constitution states "that the citizens of this State have a right to keep and to bear arms for their common defense; but the Legislature shall have power, by law, to regulate the wearing of arms with a view to prevent crime."

Those fighting to uphold citizen's rights argue that several statutes enacted by the Tennessee Legislature since the 1970s regarding firearms and weapons, exceed the written 1870 constitutional restriction upon the Legislature's regulatory power.

Moving to stricter laws at the opposite end of gun rights, Illinois and Wisconsin prohibit concealed carry altogether. Wisconsin Statute plainly states that any person, except a peace officer who goes armed with a concealed weapon is guilty of a misdemeanor. All attempts to legalize concealed carry, even with a permit, have been vetoed by Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle.

A story printed in March of this year in regard to Illinois, stated that the Supreme Court was working on a major case involving Chicago and the city's complete ban on handguns. The question is whether this violates the Second Amendment. In light of those events, Rasmussen Reports conducted a national telephone survey, in which 69% of respondents say that city governments do not have the right to prevent citizens from owning handguns.

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