



DUEY STROEBEL

STATE SENATOR • 20TH DISTRICT

Testimony on SB 516

September 29, 2021

Thank you Chair Felzkowski, and members of the Senate Committee on Insurance, Licensing and Forestry for holding a public hearing on SB 516. This legislation seeks to remove an unnecessary bureaucratic tripwire to some people in Wisconsin from having their concealed carry permit from being accepted.

Under current law, the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) is required to promulgate a rule to indicate what concealed carry licenses from other states we will accept in Wisconsin. The list is on a DOJ website¹ and it is likely not well known. Until brought to my attention by constituents recently, I had forgotten Wisconsin refused to recognize concealed carry permits from 5 states entirely and only some permits from 8 other states.

Wisconsin was one of the last states to allow for the concealed carry of a firearm with the passage of 2011 Act 35. All 50 states now have a concealed carry permit process. While I was brand new to the Legislature when I voted for what became Act 35, I believe the provision about limiting out-of-state permits was meant to reassure those wary of concealed carry that Wisconsin would not be overrun by irresponsible people from other states without standards. Ten years later we can safely say this fear is not justified now, if it ever was. The selective rejection of valid concealed carry permits does not serve a public safety purpose.

The five non-reciprocity states are Oregon, New Jersey, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. These are all states with a higher representation of democrats in their respective governments than Wisconsin has had since Act 35. If my colleagues on the other side are to be taken at their word, democrats with the opportunity would take any action necessary to protect their states from the dangers of gun violence. Do we believe that progressive Oregon, Vermont or New Jersey would have failed to act if their concealed carry permitting process was in some way dangerous?

The cost of failing to act is the worst kind of bureaucratic hassle: arbitrary enforcement of a little-known regulation impacting a small number of people who, although small, will be highly motivated to make a decision adverse to Wisconsin based upon that bureaucratic hassle. Tourists from these states for whom the 2nd amendment matters to them may well visit somewhere else. Some people looking to buy a summer cottage in the Northwoods may choose to take their investment elsewhere because, as part-time residents, they won't be eligible for a Wisconsin permit even though their home state permits are invalid.

This restrictive rule negatively impacts Wisconsin's economy and our culture of 2nd amendment freedom. I believe it is time we do away with it. Please support SB 516. Thank you.

¹ <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/dles/cib/conceal-carry/reciprocity>



RICK GUNDRUM

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 58TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on Senate Bill 516

Senate Committee on Insurance, Licensing, and Forestry | September 29, 2021 | Room 411 South

Chairwoman Felzkowski, Vice-Chairman Stafsholt and other distinguished Members of the Senate Committee on Insurance, Licensing, and Forestry, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 516 this afternoon. I am proud to have authored this legislation with my friend and Senator, Duey Stroebel, in order to remove unnecessary infringements on our Second Amendment rights.

Under current law, the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) issues licenses to go armed with a concealed weapon. DOJ may issue a license only to a Wisconsin resident or an active military member stationed in Wisconsin. In addition, DOJ must conduct a background check to ensure the individual is not prohibited from possessing a firearm.

Wisconsin law presently says that an out-of-state resident may go armed with a concealed weapon in the same manner as a Wisconsin licensee if the out-of-state resident has a valid license issued by another state and the issuing state is on a list that DOJ maintains of the states that perform background checks on applicants before issuing a license.

Senate Bill 516 removes the needless requirement that the issuing state must be on a list maintained by DOJ. Should our bill become law, an out-of-state resident may go armed with a concealed weapon in the same manner as a Wisconsin licensee if the out-of-state resident has a valid license issued by another state.

The way Wisconsin presently approaches concealed carry reciprocity is confusing and creates a regulatory patchwork of acceptable licenses. This affects both visitors and part-time residents and requires them to traverse a confusing maze of burdensome red tape. Our bill will treat all licenses the same. It is important to note that our bill does not make any changes to statutory requirements for Wisconsin residents who wish to concealed carry in our state.

Wisconsin has many individuals who own secondary residences within the state. Additionally, many people travel across state lines for their job and they have a strong individual right, according to the Supreme Court of the United States decisions in *Heller* (2008) and *McDonald* (2010), to defend themselves, their family, and their property in emergency situations.

According to Tim Schmidt, who is the President and Founder of the U.S. Concealed Carry Association (USCCA), there are millions of new gun owners in the United States and 21 million gun sales last year alone. The 21 Million gun sales included a higher rate of women and minority groups. In addition, Mr. Schmidt had over 2,000 new instructors join their ranks of over 7,000 instructors across the country. It is apparent that as interest and enthusiasm for firearm ownership increases across the country, so does the understanding that proper training and education are a necessary part of being a responsible gun owner.

I am proud to have USCCA in my District. I would like to again thank the Honorable members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify today.



WISCONSIN GUN OWNERS INC

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My name is Thomas Leager, and I represent the members of Wisconsin Gun Owners Inc., members who overwhelmingly support Constitutional Carry. Meaning, our members are supportive of going even further than this legislation suggests. They would like to see the legislators of this body propose a law removing the need for Concealed Carry permits altogether.

Short of that goal, we are pleased to see that, at the very least, Wisconsin is willing to recognize that the Second Amendment and carry laws should not vary state to state, but that the right to carry a firearm for protection is integral in a free society.

A few weeks back I had a friend call me, a current national guardsman and former soldier in the U.S. Army; he told me of his frustration while planning a trip with his new bride and her son. He lamented the variable nature of carry laws in many states. He had to plan massive detours and waste time and gas, just as not to risk being pulled over in an anti-gun state—which takes some doing, as Wisconsin borders Illinois, one of the worst states to be a gun owner.

Why should someone who has served our country, as he did, have to take such tedious steps to ensure A.) That he would not get in any trouble, and B.) that he could assure that he and his family would be safe if God-forbid, the worst happened, and he had to use his firearm.

The previous example is just one of the millions of stories of hardship that gun-owning Americans face. It shows why requiring licensing to carry your firearm is not only wrong but serves as just another barrier to the Second Amendment rights of the average citizen. It also serves as a glaring testament to the inconsistencies between carry laws from state to state.

Surely, politicians do not worry about this, as they tour with their entourages of fully armed and well-paid security forces... But for the ordinary American, this is not the case. Not only is it a barrier, but it serves to show the massive and ineffective redundancies in the system.

If I get background checked when I purchase my firearm, as the law requires, why should I pay a fee and have another background check just to carry the darn thing?! It seems more like a money-making racket than a regulation. It makes no sense, and the discrepancies between states and their laws also serves as another glaring example of the current governing system's ignorance and contempt for the Constitutional rights of everyday Americans.

So, in conclusion, I would suggest going farther than this legislation offers and getting rid of the need for government permission slips altogether in the State of Wisconsin. But, short of that, I am very pleased to say that this legislation is not only necessary but serves as a fraction of the legal relief that U.S. and Wisconsin gun owners, who have suffered under a constant onslaught of government overreach and constitutional infringement, deserve.

Thank You,
Thomas C. Leager
Wisconsin Gun Owners Inc.

September 29, 2021

To the Committee on Insurance Licensing and Forestry,

I am submitting written testimony in opposition to SB516 which is being considered by the committee today.

According to a recent report by WAVE and the Center for American Progress (CAP), since the passage of Wisconsin's law to allow people to carry concealed weapons (CCW) passed nearly a decade ago, evidence shows the following:

- Trends in Wisconsin suggest that the passage of the CCW law was associated with a rise in gun homicides.
- Wisconsin's CCW law is associated with "an increase in violent gun-related crime."
- "Gun theft increased significantly following the enactment of the CCW law" in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin legislators should not expand concealed carry reciprocity to allow people who are licensed to carry concealed weapons in other states--including states with CCW laws that include few or no training requirements and do not have a prohibition for people with dangerous histories--to carry concealed weapons in Wisconsin.

Expanding concealed carry reciprocity would weaken Wisconsin's already minimal concealed carry license requirements and create many challenges for law enforcement.

Wisconsin is on track for another record year of gun violence after Madison and Milwaukee saw record increases in 2020. SB516 takes us in the wrong direction, and I strongly encourage the committee to oppose this legislation.

Sincerely,

Heidi Rose

Program Director

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