

Challenges Related to National Concealed Carry Reciprocity Proposals

*A SEARCH
Recommendation
Background Paper*

Background

Lawmakers are reviewing legislation that (among other items) would allow an individual with a state-issued concealed carry license or permit to carry a concealed handgun into or possess a concealed handgun in any other state that allows concealed carry, as long as the permit holder follows the laws of that state.

SEARCH respectfully requests that lawmakers consider the challenges states and concealed carry permit holders could face if such proposals became law.

Varying State Requirements

State Disqualifiers: Numerous states have laws that impose disqualifiers for an individual to obtain a concealed carry permit, in addition to the 10 categories established by Federal law. For example, certain states will not grant a concealed carry permit if an individual has a history of abusing alcohol or drugs, has been adjudicated delinquent as a juvenile, or has been convicted of certain misdemeanors, while other states have no such disqualifiers.

- Under certain legislative proposals, an individual who is denied a concealed carry permit in his or her state of residence could potentially travel to a state with fewer restrictions to obtain a concealed carry permit.

Training: Concealed carry permit training requirements vary by state. For example, certain state statutes require safe handling courses, live-fire training, and/or demonstration of shooting proficiency, while other states have no such requirements.

- Under certain legislative proposals, an individual who acquires a concealed carry permit in a state with minimal or no training requirements could lawfully carry a concealed handgun in a state with rigorous training requirements.

Due to the various state concealed carry requirements, many states that permit individuals to concealed carry do not accept concealed carry permits from all other states.

Law Enforcement Challenges

Enacting national concealed carry reciprocity legislation could pose logistical challenges for law enforcement. For example, numerous law enforcement agencies would be required to:

- Provide officer training and establish mechanisms to confirm the validity of other states' concealed carry permits. (Many states do not have the capability to query a concealed carry permit to see if it is valid in another state.)

- Establish systems to notify law enforcement when a concealed carry permit holder from another state enters the state.
- Create mechanisms to notify law enforcement if a concealed carry permit holder's permit from another state is revoked.

Moreover, state and local law enforcement would be limited in their ability to enforce federal concealed carry reciprocity laws. In most instances, federal law enforcement would be responsible for enforcement actions.

Protecting the public requires that information be available to decision-makers in a manner that is timely, accurate, complete, and secure. Implementing effective policies, procedures, and technology to allow pertinent information on concealed carry permits to be shared will be challenging and time consuming for law enforcement across the nation.

**Concealed Carry
Permit Holders:
Required to
Interpret State
Laws**

Enacting national concealed carry reciprocity legislation would require a concealed carry permit holder to understand the laws and requirements of each state he or she enters.

- A concealed carry permit holder may be required to learn the laws of additional states, including laws restricting the type of firearms permitted and locations where firearms are prohibited, such as schools, public parks, etc.

Requiring citizens to understand and follow the concealed carry laws of each state will not only place a burden on concealed carry permit holders to learn the laws of each state, but could also lead to citizens inadvertently breaking state laws due to misunderstandings of states' concealed carry requirements.

Recommendation

Each state has unique statutory authority governing its citizens and their safety. These statutes impact individual states in very specific ways.

- States should continue to establish and maintain their own concealed carry permit and reciprocity policies and procedures.

Setting policies and processes related to concealed carry permits and reciprocity are not activities that can be generalized by a federal decision.

**Additional
Information**

Please contact SEARCH's Director of Government Affairs, Melissa Nee (melissa@search.org), if you have questions or need more information.

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