

S. 446

FEDERALLY MANDATED CONCEALED CARRY RECIPROCITY

INTRODUCED BY SEN. JOHN CORNYN (R-TX)

SUMMARY S. 446, “The Constitutional Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2017,” introduced by Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX), would allow dangerous people to carry guns nationwide without regard for the laws of the states they are in. It poses serious challenges for law enforcement, who would be unable to verify that an individual with an out-of-state concealed weapons permit is legally carrying a loaded firearm.

DISASTROUS FOR THE PUBLIC Some states have very strong laws limiting who can carry guns in public and require training and a thorough evaluation to do so. Other states issue permits using lower standards, even to non-residents. The 12 states with the loosest laws (“permitless carry states”) do not require a permit, meaning a person may carry even without a background check. This bill would give people who have obtained a permit from any state and those from permitless carry states the authority to carry concealed handguns across the country without regard to the laws of states they are in, and even allow them to carry concealed handguns in states that explicitly prohibit those same people from even possessing firearms.

DISASTROUS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES Certain states prohibit people who have been convicted of violent misdemeanors from possessing handguns, while others prohibit people who are under the age of 21 from possessing handguns. This bill would override those prohibitions as long as an individual is legally able to possess a handgun in his or her own state, allowing potentially dangerous individuals from other states to legally carry hidden, loaded guns in communities where residents could not.

DISASTROUS FOR STATES’ RIGHTS Each state can already decide whether or to what extent it will recognize concealed weapons permits issued by other states. States have this authority to protect public safety, and many states choose to recognize permits only from states with permitting standards similar to their own. Other states only recognize permits from states that recognize those states’ own permits through reciprocity agreements. By overriding these state laws and agreements, this bill ignores individual states’ safety training and permitting standards and gives residents of states with the loosest laws the ability to carry anywhere in the country. Instead of creating a national standard for public safety, S. 446 reduces all states’ standards to allow untrained and unpermitted individuals the ability to carry concealed in any state.

DISASTROUS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT S. 446 would force law enforcement to confront large numbers of armed travelers with out-of-state concealed weapons permits, without a way to verify that an individual is legally allowed to carry in public. Some state permit cards do not contain the holder’s photograph, looking more like library cards than an official document and making these permits easy to forge. Unlike with driver’s licenses, no nationwide database—and sometimes no statewide database—exists for concealed weapons permits. The only way to verify a permit’s authenticity would be for law enforcement to contact the issuing authority of another state for confirmation, a potentially lengthy and complicated process that would divert officers’ attention from pressing public safety issues.