

July 20, 2009

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Jim Kessler, Vice President for Policy
RE: Opposing the Thune Amendment and Appealing to Gun Owners

Concealed carry has long been and should remain the purview of state and local laws. Now an amendment to the Defense Authorization bill authored by Senator Thune will bypass state and local laws concerning who can carry concealed firearms.¹ The Thune provision is perhaps the most sweeping pre-emption of state firearms laws in history, as it would force states to honor any concealed carry permit issued in any other state. It would effectively mean, for example, that any person with a concealed carry permit in Macon would be able to carry a concealed firearm in Minneapolis, and anyone with a permit in Detroit would be able to carry a concealed firearm in Des Moines.

The Thune Amendment will hinder law enforcement efforts to combat gun trafficking since those illegally smuggling guns across state lines will simply have to produce a CCW permit from any state to justify carrying bundles of firearms.

Although this amendment would affect just about every single state, city, and county in America, it does not have the endorsement of governors, mayors, and county officials. It also does not have the endorsement of local police chiefs and sheriffs. In fact, hundreds of mayors, police officials, and police organizations have spoken out against the amendment. This is largely because under the Thune amendment, in many instances local police will be powerless to apprehend out-of-state people who carry a firearm as long as they can produce a permit – the legitimacy of which will be difficult to verify.

Rural areas and urban areas have very different wishes and needs when it comes to gun laws. Now on one of the most fundamental local questions – whether a person should be able to carry a loaded firearm on the streets of your town – will be decided thousands of miles away in Congress. And the state and local carry laws of nearly every town in the country will be at the mercy of lawmakers from Alaska to Florida.

For those who wish to oppose the Thune amendment, we offer the following talking points:

- I believe strongly in Second Amendment rights, but those rights don't extend to strangers coming into our state and carrying firearms in public places.
- The Thune amendment is a Washington power grab that says that states have

¹ Except Wisconsin and Illinois.

virtually no say concerning the carrying of firearms in public places. Our laws will now be dictated by legislators and governors thousands of miles away who don't care at all about our state and its people.

- The Thune amendment is anti-cop and has no real support from sheriffs, chiefs, and officers in our state.
- It ties the hands of police. It will bar police from taking any action against any out-of-state stranger who comes into our community carrying a firearm as long as they possess a CCW permit issued by some bureaucrat somewhere else.
- This bill does not have the support of the mayors, the governor, the state legislature and the county leaders of our state.

In every state there are those who wish to obtain a CCW permit, and among those who obtain a permit, there are those who wish to carry that firearm in other states. In exchange for granting that privilege to some, the Thune amendment will allow anyone who obtains a permit from the other 49 states to come to your state and carry a firearm. For even the most ardent gun rights supporter, it's hard to see how this proposed law could be popular or beneficial. How would people in your state answer this question:

There is a bill before Congress that would allow any concealed carry holder from New York City to carry a handgun in our state. Would you favor or oppose such a law?