



Dear Chairman Prozanski, Vice Chairman Kruse, and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

The state of Oregon currently has a strong concealed carry permitting system in place that helps ensure dangerous individuals are not allowed to carry concealed, loaded weapons throughout communities in Oregon. However, the bill under consideration today, H.B. 3093, raises serious concerns as it would undermine the state's strong law by allowing individuals who are not residents of the state to carry concealed, loaded firearms in the state even if they would not be eligible for a permit to do so as an Oregon resident.

The importance of strong laws regarding who is permitted to carry concealed guns cannot be overstated. According to a study conducted by the Violence Policy Center, since 2007, 743 people have been killed by individuals with concealed carry permits, and 29 mass shootings have been carried out by people who have been granted such permits.ⁱ Permitting an individual to carry a concealed and loaded gun in the community is a significant responsibility, and one that should only be granted to individuals who do not pose a threat to public safety. Strong concealed carry permitting laws go beyond the laws regarding who is permitted to possess a gun and add extra layers of protection for the carrying of concealed guns, such as by denying eligibility for these permits to individuals with certain misdemeanor convictions or history of substance abuse and requiring gun safety training as a prerequisite to obtaining a permit.

States take a number of approaches to determining who is eligible to carry concealed guns and Oregon's current laws are among the strongest. To be eligible for a concealed carry permit in Oregon, an individual must be at least 21 years old, and have fulfilled certain specific firearm safety training requirements.ⁱⁱ Additionally, Oregon law provides that anyone who has been convicted of a misdemeanor crime within four years preceding the application for a permit, is on pretrial release or has an outstanding warrant for arrest, is a registered sex offender, or who is subject to a stalking citation or protective order, is ineligible for a concealed carry permit.ⁱⁱⁱ An individual must also submit two character references when applying for a permit—individuals who can vouch that the applicant is a law-abiding and responsible gun owner.^{iv} Sheriffs also have the discretion to deny a license if there is reason to believe that the applicant poses a danger to him/herself or others or if there is a pattern of threatening or unlawful behavior.^v

With respect to recognizing carry permits issued by other states, Oregon currently does not have a program to honor out-of-state permits. County sheriffs have the discretion to issue carry permits to certain out-of-state residents who reside in contiguous states and who frequently have business in Oregon. However, permits in this instance are issued sparingly on a case-by-case basis.^{vi}

All of these safety measures ensure that dangerous individuals are not allowed to carry concealed weapons, while leaving ample room for law-abiding Oregonians to effectively use the permit system. If Oregon were to implement a system for recognizing carry permits issued by other states, it should guarantee that the states that receive this benefit have at least the same eligibility standards for the issuance of such permits as Oregon does. H.B. 3093 falls short in this regard and would undermine the current law by allowing out-of-state residents to carry concealed guns in the state even if they would be ineligible for an Oregon permit. H.B. 3093 would mandate that out-of-state carry permits be recognized by the state if two conditions are met: the issuing state honors Oregon-issued permits and the issuing state mandates certain training requirements as a prerequisite to issuing a permit. However, this bill fails to account for the other aspects of Oregon's current strong concealed carry permitting law by limiting reciprocity to only those states that have equally as stringent requirements for who is eligible for a permit based on other factors, such as criminal history or stalking-related protective order. If this bill were enacted into law, stalkers from states like Arizona, Idaho, Kansas, and Nebraska would be able to legally carry their hidden, loaded gun in Oregon despite the fact that Oregon has already determined that such people should not be granted this privilege because of the risk they pose to public safety.

In addition, H.B. 3093 would undermine the groundbreaking new law just enacted in Oregon that requires background checks for all gun sales. Many states with weak concealed carry permit laws that issue permits to known dangerous individuals also do not require background checks on all gun sales. In these states, prohibited purchasers are easily able to buy guns either online or at gun shows, bypassing the background check requirement. They can then use their permit to legally carry these guns around the community, concealed and loaded. The intersection of weak permitting laws and limited background checks creates other dangerous situations, such as in North Carolina where private sales are not subject to background checks, and where a *New York Times* investigation found that 2,400 concealed carry permits were issued to people convicted of misdemeanor crimes and felonies between 2007 and 2011.^{vii}

Allowing out-of-state residents to carry concealed weapons in Oregon is a significant change in policy, and such a decision should be accompanied by a well-designed and thoroughly rigorous system. Law enforcement should have the ability to ensure that potentially dangerous individuals who do not meet Oregon's concealed carry requirements are not allowed to bypass the system with an out-of-state permit issued by a state with significantly weaker laws.

Sincerely,

Chelsea Parsons
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ⁱ Violence Policy Center, “Concealed Carry Killers,” available at <http://concealedcarrykillers.org/>.

ⁱⁱ Or. Rev. Stat. § 166.291.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Ibid.

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii} Michael Luo, “Guns in Public, and Out of Sight,” *The New York Times*, December 26, 2011, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/27/us/more-concealed-guns-and-some-are-in-the-wrong-hands.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.