

Submitter: Garth Gonsalves  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4145

As an eight-year military veteran, I strongly oppose the law enforcement waiver provisions in HB 4145. The bill creates a two-tiered system of constitutional rights by granting active and retired law enforcement officers exemptions that are denied to ordinary, law-abiding citizens, including veterans like myself.

If training, background checks, and demonstrated responsibility are the stated standards, then those standards should apply equally. Trained civilians who meet the same qualifications should receive the same treatment under the law. Instead, HB 4145 establishes a privileged class that is exempt from magazine limits and permit requirements, while everyone else must navigate additional bureaucratic hurdles, extended waiting periods, and increased fees.

This structure does not promote fairness or public trust. It tells ordinary citizens that their rights are conditional, while government employees, even after retirement, retain broader rights. That is the definition of a two-tiered system.

The bill also imposes additional costs and administrative burdens that disproportionately impact marginalized and lower-income communities. At a time when immigrant communities already feel heightened vulnerability and uncertainty under current federal enforcement policies, restricting lawful self-defense rights, and making them more expensive to exercise, is deeply troubling. Communities that may feel the most need to protect themselves should not be priced out of exercising a constitutional right.

By increasing fees, extending permit timelines, and layering on new requirements, HB 4145 risks turning Second Amendment rights into something accessible primarily to law enforcement or those with sufficient money and time to comply. Constitutional rights are not meant to depend on employment status or financial capacity.

The right to keep and bear arms is guaranteed by the Constitution. Any legislation that carves out preferred classes of citizens while burdening others moves us away from equal protection under the law and toward a system where rights depend on who you are rather than the standards you meet.

Equal training and equal responsibility should mean equal rights. Anything less undermines both fairness and the constitutional principles many veterans have sworn to defend.