



Unlicensed Carry Undermines Individual Responsibility
Needed for Second Amendment Right
by: Raul Camacho

I chose, “It’s not just a right, but a responsibility!” as the slogan of my firearm training academy because as a former Texas Peace Officer, I know firsthand that the consequences of guns getting into the wrong hands – the hands of someone with criminal intent or someone unskilled in handling their weapon – can be devastating. When guns are involved, a careless act in a moment’s time can change lives forever. As a gun owner and a 2nd Amendment supporter I believe in conscientious gun ownership, I think it’s time our lawmakers take seriously the responsibility that is required for gun ownership and oppose two dangerous ‘constitutional carry’ proposals that are currently being considered in the Texas Legislature.

HB 1911 by Rep. James White and HB 375 by Rep. Jonathan Stickland would remove licensure requirements for handguns. If either passes, individuals who want to carry handguns in public could do so without ever taking a training class or ever proving they know the least thing about handling and firing a handgun. Carrying a gun on a daily basis is a lifestyle – that requires skills, discipline, continuous training and a proper mindset. Law enforcement would no longer be able to rely on an individual’s carrying or not carrying a permit to determine if they are permitted to possess a handgun, greatly hampering law enforcement personnel’s ability to do their jobs. In a state where each year thousands die due to gun violence, our leaders should be looking at ways to bolster, not erode, safety education and training.

Last week, I stood up for safety and responsibility by testifying before the House Homeland Security and Public Safety Committee to oppose both HB 375 and HB 1911. As a result, a group called Open Carry Texas chose to target my business, Safety Measures, and encouraged others to post negative reviews online. This type of childish behavior by backers of these bills should be of great concern to the Texas Legislature when deciding whether to allow any Texan to carry a gun without training, or knowledge of the law. Some gun rights groups that claim they are responsible, good citizens are hostile toward anyone that believes differently than they do. This is not a good mix for someone carrying a deadly weapon.

Responsible gun owners with clean records already know this and support maintaining a licensure program. It’s common sense. Our state licensure program ensures that

individuals who choose to arm themselves have the skill level needed to safely carry their firearms and avoid injuring themselves or others. The process to obtain a license is straightforward and has been a long-running success story for our state. Licensure is supported by law enforcement and the mass majority of Texans and it is a small thing to ask of individuals seeking to own a tool not only capable of lethal consequences.

Other constitutional amendments also have limitations. With respect to the First Amendment, members of the press must apply for a permit. And under the 15th Amendment, citizens must register to vote and provide identification. It is logical that some type of regulation also applies to the Second Amendment.

I surveyed my customers- - a clientele of largely Republican and politically independent handgun owners -- and the results were overwhelming. 97% said training and education for handgun owners is beneficial. Most telling, 97% believe that taking a safety education course could prevent gun injuries caused by carelessness and ignorance.

It just stands to reason that the more handgun owners know about their weapons -- how to use them and how to store them -- the safer we will all be. Training and education increase individual freedom by increasing individual knowledge. Built into our Second Amendment right to gun ownership is the requirement for reasonable regulation, ensuring that with this great constitutional right there is a mechanism to require that individuals act responsibly.

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