



Exercising the Right

One Bad Idea

Stupidity seems to be a prerequisite for public office these days. A perfect example comes to us from Illinois, where Attorney General Lisa Madigan wants to publish the state's list of gun owners. As a March 3 *Investor's Business Daily (IBD)* editorial explained, the list would place "the lives and safety of non-gun-owners at risk. It's a list for criminals of the best potential victims."

It would appear that the anti-gun crowd in Illinois came up with a new strategy to further their agenda. *IBD* explains that the anti-gunners hope to "shame and embarrass gun owners by publicly naming them in much the same manner some communities print the names of johns who patronize hookers in the local paper."

But publishing such a list gives criminals an unfair advantage, warned Republican state Representative Ron Stephens. "You are by design also publishing a list of everyone who doesn't carry a firearm."

Richard Pearson, director of the Illinois State Rifle Association, also had his concerns about publishing such a list. "The safety of real people is at stake here.... Once this information is released, it will be distributed to street gangs and gun-control groups who will use the data to target gun owners for crime and harassment."

Pro-gun but Unconstitutional

It's been a long, hard battle for U.S. Rep. Cliff Stearns (R-Fla.) in his quest to allow concealed-weapons permit holders to carry their handguns across state lines. Now it finally seems like Stearns' bill might get the push it needs to finally clear the House, according to a March 2 article in the *Gainesville Sun*. Stearns just recently filed his National Right-To-Carry Reciprocity Act, which would "force states that issue concealed-weapons permits to recognize valid permits held by visitors from other so-called concealed-carry states, such as Florida."

Permit holders would still be subject to the regulations of the host state, not those of their home state. Currently, 48 states issue permits to carry concealed firearms or allow their residents to carry concealed firearms for lawful reasons without a permit.

There are the typical gun-phobic cries about increased risk of violence, but the only criticism that actually carries weight is the one made on constitutionalist grounds. While it is unpopular to acknowledge it, Congress with its limited defined and enumerated powers under the Constitution has no legitimate authority to dictate to the states how they should handle gun laws.

Concealed Carry on Campus in Oklahoma

NECN.com reported on March 2 that pro-gun legislation was narrowly approved by a state House committee. The law would allow faculty members and administrators at Oklahoma's colleges and universities to carry concealed handguns on campus.

Liberal professors and administrators campaigned against the law, arguing that "the presence of guns on college campuses will create unsafe conditions for students and faculty and that campus security should be the responsibility of trained law enforcement officers."



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Rep. Randy Terrill (R-Moore), the author of the bill, disagreed and explained that this new measure would provide a way for faculty and staff to protect themselves and others from campus violence. Terrill was quoted as saying, "We're trusting these faculty members with your children.... This really is throwing down the gauntlet to them."

The measure is similar to a bill pending in the Senate that authorizes only those with state-issued concealed handgun permits to carry on campus; academic institutions will still be able to issue campus-wide bans on handguns under the bill. Oklahoma State University student Adrienne O'Reilly, a member of Students for Concealed Carry on Campus, supports the proposed law. O'Reilly told the news that "about 70 colleges nationwide already allow concealed weapons on campus and there have been no incidents of gun violence."

Dueling Billboards

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg has been on an anti-gun crusade almost all of his public life, and he uses large sums of his own fortune to support this personal vendetta. Recently Bloomberg teamed up with Mayors Against Illegal Guns to send a moving billboard truck around the country proclaiming the dangers of gun violence. The Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms (CCRKBA) struck back: They announced on February 23 the launch of a national effort to counter billionaire "Bloomberg's campaign of fear against firearms and their owners."

CCRKBA Chairman Alan M. Gottlieb said Bloomberg's campaign "tells less than half of a story, so we're setting the record straight." Gottlieb continued:

We're answering Bloomberg's flash with genuine substance.... We plan to have a truck of our own in several major cities to tell people what Bloomberg isn't telling them. Guns are legally used between 800,000 and 2.5 million times annually in self-defense situations. That's 2,100 to 6,800 people every day who successfully use firearms to defend themselves, or prevent a criminal attack. In the majority of those incidents, no shots are fired, so nobody is injured or killed. In some cases where shots are fired by armed citizens, several lives are saved.... While Bloomberg is shooting blanks, CCRKBA will be hitting the bull's eye with information Americans need to protect their civil rights.... Bloomberg's campaign is a smokescreen, America needs to look behind the facade to see that his ultimate goal is to convince Congress to implement New York-style gun-control laws, ban most semiautomatic firearms, stretch background checks out to between six and nine months, and to put gun shows out of business. No Mayor, regardless how wealthy he is, should dictate to Congress or the people the terms of their civil rights.



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