



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on June 17, 2017

Rep. Massie Offers D.C. Concealed Carry Reciprocity Bill

Kentucky Congressman Thomas Massie (R) has introduced a bill that would afford reciprocity of firearm carry permits to those from other states working in Washington, D.C.

Massie, the chairman of the Second Amendment Caucus, responded to the reprehensible shooting at the congressional baseball game practice held in Alexandria, Virginia on June 14 (in which Rep. Steve Scalise [R-La.] was seriously injured) by offering H.R. 2909, the D.C Personal Protection Reciprocity Act. This legislation would allow individuals with a valid concealed carry permit issued from their home state to carry their firearms in the District of Columbia.



“After the horrific shooting at the Republican Congressional Baseball practice, there will likely be calls for special privileges to protect politicians,” Congressman Massie explained in a statement announcing the legislation. “Our reaction should instead be to protect the right of all citizens guaranteed in the Constitution: the right to self-defense. I do not want to extend a special privilege to politicians, because the right to keep and bear arms is not a privilege, it is a God-given right protected by our Constitution.”

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“If not for the heroic efforts of the United States Capitol Police at the ball field yesterday, things could have been much worse. What’s always evident in these situations is this: the only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun,” Massie added.

“To ensure public safety, we need to repeal laws that keep good guys from carrying guns, since not everyone has a personal police detail,” Massie argued. “The right to keep and bear arms is the common person’s first line of defense in these situations, and it should never be denied.”

Congress has the authority to legislate in this area pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 17 of the U.S. Constitution, which gives Congress the authority to “exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever over such District as may become the Seat of the Government of the United States.”

As Massie explained in a press release promoting the legislation, “Although Virginia extends reciprocity to concealed carry permit holders in many states, the members of Congress and accompanying staff traveled directly from D.C., and were traveling back to D.C after the practice was over. It was D.C.’s harsh gun control laws that prevented these law-abiding citizens from exercising their right to bear arms.”

Washington D.C.’s anti-gun atmosphere is notorious.

In 2015, *Guns and Ammo* published the following summary of the state of the right to keep and bear arms in the nation’s capital:



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While D.C. is hardly a home for America's gun owners, things have improved slightly in the last few years. After the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that the District's ban on carrying a firearm outside the home for self-defense was unconstitutional, D.C. abandoned its attempt to enforce an outright ban on the carrying of handguns. Instead, the District is in the process of imposing a "may issue" permit system that is unlikely to issue many, if any, permits to law-abiding citizens within the city. D.C. residents must still register all firearms with the Metro Police Department, and legal shooting opportunities within the District are nonexistent. If you're a gun owner looking to move to the D.C. area, take a hard look at Northern Virginia instead.

This unconstitutional impediment to self-defense inarguably contributed to the attempted massacre of members of Congress.

If not for the present of Representative Scalise's security officers, the outcome of the shooting could have been much deadlier.

Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky) was present at the practice when the assailant carried out his crime, and he said that but for the police presence, Wednesday's attack "would have been a massacre."

Massie and Paul are frequent allies in attempts to buttress the Constitution, and Massie remarked on the events after hearing about them from Paul's first-hand report.

"From the description of the incident yesterday that I've received from my colleagues, it's clear that the Capitol Hill police who were there are heroic," Massie said, as quoted in the *Washington Examiner*. "But had Steve Scalise not been there, there would have been far more, would have been fatalities and lot of congressmen would have been hurt."

As is to be expected when anyone tries to protect the people's right to keep and bear arms, there was a Democrat ready to denounce the proposal.

Eleanor Holmes Norton, delegate from D.C., criticized Massie for "shamefully using the District as political fodder" and "abus[ing] congressional authority over D.C."

Massie pushed back, pointing out that Norton has no power to prevent people from protecting themselves.

"The delegate from D.C. may seek to prevent her constituents from exercising their right to self-defense, but she lacks constitutional authority to deny that right to all those who visit the nation's capital," Massie reponded. "The Constitution is clear on Congress' jurisdiction over D.C."

The Constitution is equally clear regarding the government's lack of authority to abridge in any degree or for any reason this most basic liberty: "The right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

Although Americans have allowed this right to be redefined by Congress, the courts, and the president, the plain language of the Second Amendment explicitly forbids any infringement on this right that protects all others.

Take, for example, theses statements by our forefathers regarding the purpose of the passage of this amendment.

In commenting on the Constitution in 1833, Joseph Story wrote:

The right of the citizens to keep and bear arms has justly been considered, as the palladium of the liberties of a republic; since it offers a strong moral check against the usurpation and arbitrary



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power of rulers; and will generally, even if these are successful in the first instance, enable the people to resist and triumph over them.

In his own commentary on the works of the influential jurist Blackstone, Founding-era legal scholar St. George Tucker wrote:

This may be considered as the true palladium of liberty.... The right of self defence is the first law of nature: in most governments it has been the study of rulers to confine this right within the narrowest limits possible. Wherever standing armies are kept up, and the right of the people to keep and bear arms is, under any colour or pretext whatsoever, prohibited, liberty, if not already annihilated, is on the brink of destruction.

Writing in *The Federalist*, Alexander Hamilton explained:

If the representatives of the people betray their constituents, there is then no resource left but in the exertion of that original right of self-defense which is paramount to all positive forms of government, and which against the usurpations of the national rulers, may be exerted with infinitely better prospect of success than against those of the rulers of an individual state.

Representative Massie, a reliable defender of the right of self-defense and all other rights protected by the Constitution, is once again stepping up to stop the insanity of keeping good people from protecting themselves.

As of the time of publication of this article, the text of H.R. 2909 has not been received, but the bill has been referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform for consideration.

Photo of Rep. Massie: Gage Skidmore



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