



Gun Rights Expanding After Florida Shooting

Following mass shootings at the Connecticut elementary school, the Orlando gay nightclub, the Las Vegas concert, and now the massacre at the Florida high school, anti-Second Amendment groups such as Everytown for Gun Safety and others ramped up pressure on federal legislators to “do something, anything” about the violence. Happily, very little further infringements of precious rights guaranteed by the Second Amendment have occurred.



On the state level, in fact, [much progress has been made](#) in reasserting those rights. Twelve states, including West Virginia, Kansas, and Missouri, now have laws allowing residents to carry concealed firearms without first having to obtain permission from the government to do so. In addition, permitless-carry bills are pending in at least another 19 states. North Dakota, Georgia, and a growing number of other states have recently passed laws giving their citizens the right to carry firearms in places such as public parks, concerts, bars, and churches.

Twenty-two states have bills pending that would allow their citizens the right to carry firearms on school and college campuses. Other states, such as Texas and Oklahoma, already allow licensed gun owners to carry concealed on campuses, while a new law in Iowa reduces restrictions on civilians carrying guns into courthouses and city halls.

Most notably, the Florida massacre has revived interest in similar bills that have languished in committee, including Florida itself. Harold County (Texas) school superintendent David Thweatt put it well. When his district first allowed members of school staffs to start carrying sidearms on campus, “It was iffy ... for the first several years [but] that all changed in December 2012 after Sandy Hook. Suddenly it took on a whole new meaning.”

So it has in Florida. A year ago Florida State Senator Dennis Baxley and State Representative Don Hahnfedit offered a bill to eliminate “gun free zones” on school campuses, but it was never adopted. Now, however, that bill has gained new life, and is scheduled for hearings by three separate committees. State Senator Greg Steube, who decided to bring the bill up for discussion, declared, “I don’t feel gun-free zones protect anyone but criminals and there is no evidence that says otherwise.”

Similar pressure is being applied on the federal level for passage of the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act (CCRA). It has already passed the House overwhelmingly but now advocates are telling the *Wall Street Journal* that getting the bill passed by the Senate is their top priority. This bill would allow people who legally carry in their own states to carry in every other state, similar to driver’s licenses.

The long war against guns and the Second Amendment is far from over, by any means. But at the moment, pressure by anti-gun groups to restrict those rights following ghastly atrocities, such as that in Florida last week, appear to be having exactly the opposite effect.

An Ivy League graduate and former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on February 20, 2018

American magazine and blogs frequently at LightFromTheRight.com, primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelmann@thenewamerican.com.

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