



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on September 9, 2022

Jewish Gun Group Plans to Sue New York Over Law Banning Concealed Carry in Churches and Synagogues

A Jewish firearms organization is preparing to sue New York state over its new gun-control law, which prohibits most congregants from carrying a concealed weapon into a house of worship.

The New York State Jewish Gun Club has “retained a civil rights attorney to challenge the law and is asking others to join the fight,” reports the Bronx’s [News 12](#).

“[Founder Tzvi Waldman] says synagogues should be able to let licensed civilians carry guns in case of an attack.”

The law, known as the Concealed Carry Improvement Act (CCIA), was introduced and passed on July 1, just eight days after the Supreme Court [invalidated](#) the Empire State’s prior, highly restrictive concealed-carry law. The CCIA, which took effect September 1, makes it a felony for anyone to carry a concealed weapon in a “sensitive” location unless he is an active or retired police officer, an active-duty member of the military, or a private security guard. As one might expect from a law specifically designed to circumvent the Supreme Court’s decision, that list of “sensitive” locations is quite lengthy and includes most public buildings, private businesses, schools, and houses of worship.

Houses of worship, especially synagogues, have good reason to oppose the new law. As [New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedoms](#) observes, “In essence, the state has made it unlawful for houses of worship to have armed congregants serve as members of their security teams unless those congregants are active or retired law enforcement officers. Churches would be permitted to hire professional security, but that could prove cost prohibitive for many houses of worship.”

It is, in fact, quite common for churches and synagogues to have congregants packing heat.

“Almost every orthodox synagogue in Baltimore has an armed congregant,” Rabbi Yaakov Menken, the managing director for the Coalition of Jewish Values, told the [Daily Caller](#). “People do not feel like calling the police or having an armed security guard who may be five blocks away is enough.”

Even if the police got there in time, they could react as the officers did during the May school shooting



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in Uvalde, Texas. “What happens if we run into a police officer who does not want to involve himself?” Pastor Jesse Stevenson of Revive Church of Rockland County told News 12. “Why then would it not be necessary for someone who is licensed to carry?”

Houses of worship have, after all, been the sites of several shootings in recent years, from the 2015 South Carolina church shooting to the 2017 Pittsburgh synagogue massacre. A 2019 attack on a Texas church was largely [thwarted](#) by an armed worshiper, demonstrating the value of allowing concealed weapons in church services.

“The average Orthodox Jew spends up to 20 hours a week in shul (synagogue). So for us, not being able to be protected in shul means more than the average person who goes to church once a week,” Waldman told News 12.

“Violent criminals could not care less about gun free zones. They see them as easier targets,” Representative Lee Zeldin (R-N.Y.) told the Daily Caller. “This is especially dangerous for Jewish New Yorkers, who are experiencing an alarming rise in antisemitic violence, with far too few consequences for those committing the violence.”

Jews aren’t alone in fearing racially motivated attacks during worship. One clergyman told Buffalo’s [WGRZ](#) that the racist who allegedly shot 13 people, killing 10, at a Tops supermarket in that city “was seen on security camera video apparently casing an East Buffalo church the week before his supermarket attack.” Another clergy member “said they would not allow themselves to be sitting targets for a killer looking for a place where Black people congregate,” meaning worshipers at that minister’s church should be permitted to arm themselves.

“Churches should be allowed to decide for themselves whether or not congregants should be allowed to carry in church,” asserted New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedoms. “Instead, state government has taken that decision out of their hands.”

Not if the gun club’s proposed lawsuit succeeds. Waldman told the Daily Caller he is “very confident” the courts will overturn the CCIA because it is “unconstitutional on so many levels.”

“The Second Amendment,” he declared, “is not a second-class right.”



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