



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on July 3, 2014

New Georgia Law Allows Gun Owners to Carry Everywhere, Almost

Georgia's Safe Carry Protections Act [went into effect](#) on Tuesday, July 1, and nearly everyone had an opinion about it. The bill, which passed both houses overwhelmingly and was signed into law by Governor Nathan Deal, expands the places where gun owners with licenses to carry may exercise their Second Amendment rights, including churches, schools, bars, and some government buildings.



It also expands the state's "stand your ground" law so that it applies to those who have been previously convicted of felonies. In addition, the new law prevents a police officer from demanding without cause a person with a gun to produce his or her license to carry it.

Deal exulted, calling it "a great day to reaffirm our liberties," adding, "The Second Amendment should never be an afterthought. It should be at the front of our minds."

Joining in the exultation was Georgia Congressman Paul Broun, a Republican and member of the Tea Party Caucus, who added:

We know that when law-abiding citizens who know how to utilize a firearm have one on their person, it helps prevent crime. This is a law that I think is going to help prevent shootings, that it is going to help prevent crimes.

We see as we go forward that schools are going to be safer, that everybody around in any locale is going to be safer.... I think it's going to be a very positive move.

On the other hand, Pia Carusone, an advisor to Americans for Responsible Solutions, the group founded by former member of Congress Gabrielle Giffords, referred to the new law pejoratively as the "guns everywhere" law and added:

Among its many extreme provisions, it allows guns in TSA lines in the country's busiest airport, forces community school boards into bitter, divisive debates about whether they should allow guns in their children's classrooms, and broadens the conceal carry eligibility to people who have previously committed crimes with guns.

Jerry Henry, executive director of the pro-gun group Georgia Carry, which lobbied for passage of the new law, openly carried his Kimber 1911 into a popular restaurant near the Georgia Tech campus on Tuesday, followed by a journalist who wanted to check other patrons' reactions. There was no reaction. Said Henry:

The biggest misconception is that everybody is going to notice a difference with this law, but you're not going to notice a difference.

There are very few things you can do now that you couldn't do yesterday. The only change I could see coming is that you will be able to see guns on Sunday in churches.



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Others were exercising their rights on Tuesday as well, including Target, Starbucks, and Chipotle. Each has requested gun owners to leave their firearms outside before coming in to shop, drink coffee, or eat dinner. On Wednesday, Target's interim CEO John Mulligan wrote to his team members on the Company's blog:

The leadership team has been weighing a complex issue, and I want to be sure everyone understands our thoughts and ultimate decision.

As you've likely seen in the media, there has been a debate about whether guests in communities that permit "open carry" should be allowed to bring firearms into Target stores. Our approach has always been to follow local laws, and of course, we will continue to do so.

But starting today we will also respectfully request that guests not bring firearms to Target — even in communities where it is permitted by law.

Mulligan has been persuaded that the presence of citizens exercising their right to bear arms might somehow disturb the shopping experience for his guests:

This is a complicated issue, but it boils down to a simple belief: Bringing firearms to Target creates an environment that is at odds with the family-friendly shopping and work experience we strive to create.

It was complicated, no doubt, by the campaign launched by a Bloomberg-funded group called Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America to boycott Target. Shannon Watts, the founder of the group, took credit for the change of heart at Target:

Moms are thankful that Target responded quickly to the call of nearly 400,000 Americans and asked customers to keep their firearms at home.

We hope our legislators are taking notice when women and mothers collectively raise our voices.

This is not an outright ban by Target but merely a "request," with individuals also free to decide whether to carry, or not, or to shop there, or not. It appears that the new "guns everywhere" law in Georgia has expanded the freedom of everyone, including those such as Watts, who disagree. What she is doing is exercising her First Amendment rights, which happen to be backed up by the Second.

Last September Starbucks "requested" that gun owners leave their firearms behind while enjoying their cappuccino frappes in order to give them "a safe and comfortable respite from the concerns of daily life." In May Chipotle also "respectfully requested" that customers refrain from carrying while enjoying lunch or dinner.

Owners of business establishments such as Target, Starbucks, Chipotle and others are free to make such determinations — a precious right also guaranteed in the Bill of Rights.

The "guns everywhere" law in Georgia is helping stoke the resurgence of "freedom everywhere" as a result.

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