



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on February 14, 2019

## Oklahoma May Be Next State to Enact “Constitutional Carry” Law

Oklahoma is likely to become the next state to enact a “constitutional carry” law [after it was approved by the state’s House on Wednesday on a 70-30 vote.](#)

The bill would allow adult residents over the age of 21, or 18 with a military background, to carry a firearm, open or concealed, without a background check or training requirements.

“What this does is allow, as the constitution states, that a person can carry a firearm without having to purchase that right,” said State Representative Kevin West (R-Moore). “The Constitution clearly states that we have right to keep and bear arms.”

[H.B. 2597](#) does place some restrictions on where the guns can be carried, however, including public buildings, schools, professional sporting events, and casinos, and increases penalties for carrying where they are not permitted, observes State Representative John Echols (R-Oklahoma City).

Democrats in Oklahoma’s House are claiming that the bill will create a dangerous climate in the state.

“I think of a big billboard on the border of Oklahoma. Welcome to the wild wild west,” said Representative Jason Lowe (D-Midwest City).

Representative Andy Fugate (D-Oklahoma City) said, “So, this is about good guys, good people with good intentions but no training. And we will make them dangerous people.”

But the bill’s backers have been working to dispel the misinformation circulating around the bill. They note that the legislation will not stop owners from obtaining a permit or training, but simply removes those requirements for individuals who are interested in obtaining a firearm. “The ability to get a license is still available. In fact, it’s recommended especially if you travel,” said Representative West.

Supporters of the measure argue that it restores powers that do not belong to the government back to the people.

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“Training is an individual responsibility. It’s not the government’s job to mandate training to you. It should be your individual responsibility to make sure you get yourself trained,” said Travis Couture-Lovelady with the NRA.

The bill’s authors also note that permitless carry would not do away with other existing rules pertaining to firearm ownership.

“If you have a felony or if you’ve been convicted of domestic violence, you still cannot lawfully have a firearm. If you’d been adjudicated with a mental illness, you still cannot legally have a firearm,” said





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Representative West.

A Senate version of the bill, S.B. 12, introduced by State Senator Nathan Dahm (R-Broken Arrow), has not yet been heard in committee. But Senate Republican Leader Greg Treat has already stated that he supports the measure.

Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt has announced that he would sign the bill into law, the *Norman Transcript* reports.

“Conceptually, absolutely I’m going to sign it,” Governor Stitt told reporters last week. “We are going to be a state that protects the 2nd Amendment.”

A similar bill had been vetoed last year by Oklahoma’s former Republican governor, Mary Fallin, after the bill faced opposition from law enforcement. “I believe the firearms laws we currently have in place are effective, appropriate and minimal,” Fallin said in May.

But despite Fallin’s reasoning, not all law-enforcement officers believe the bill would make Oklahoma a more dangerous place.

“There will be some hurdles, but — by and large — our citizens do the right thing for the most part,” said Lt. Scott Hampton of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol. “Our criminals do not obey laws as it is, and we would just have to cross that bridge when we get there.”

The measure certainly has found support among Oklahoma residents, KTEN News reports.

“It has nothing to do with constitutional, it’s the Bill of Rights,” resident Kevin Davis said. “The Bill of Rights are not given by the government; it’s not a deal they would just acknowledge in the fact that we already had that right as human beings.”

The National Rifle Association observes that at least 14 other states have approved some form of permitless carry, the most recent of which is South Dakota, where permitless open carry will go into effect on July 1.

“I believe this legislation will further protect the Second Amendment rights of the citizens of South Dakota and this country,” said South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem when signing the bill into law.



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