



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on July 21, 2014

Tennessee Restaurant Welcomes Guns — Holstered “Unless Need Arises”

When Sharma Floyd, owner of Shiloh Brew and Chew in Maryville, Tennessee, read about a shooting at a convenience store in North Carolina that had posted a sign on its front door banning guns on the premises, [she considered it](#) both a warning and an opportunity:

They had put up a sign that said “No Weapons Allowed” and they were robbed at gunpoint two days later. The ... store manager was shot.

And that got me thinking.

First, she determined that, while she herself doesn’t own a gun, her customers certainly had a right to do so if they wished. Second, she had lost some business to a large group of motorcyclists “because they thought I didn’t allow weapons. But I believe it’s ok to carry as long as you have a permit.”

Third, she decided how best to make her position clear. She posted the following sign:

Guns are welcome on premises.

Please keep ALL weapons holstered unless need arises.

In such case, judicious marksmanship is appreciated!

Thank you. Shiloh Management.

Almost immediately she began to get not only positive feedback but also a boost in business:

I can honestly say I have gotten way more support than the one person who really gave me a lot of grief over it.

I have had so many customers take pictures of the sign, ask to meet me in person, and thank me.

Perhaps without knowing it, Floyd borrowed the language for her sign from Shooters Grill in Rifle, Colorado, owned by Lauren Boebert. Boebert posted her sign months earlier, and business grew so much that it caught the attention of the *Daily News*, *USA Today*, and Denver’s 9News. Boebert goes one step further: Her waitresses openly carry while on duty, and they’re trained to protect themselves if necessary. When asked if this was just for show, Boebert was firm in her denial: “[The guns are] real and they’re loaded and we know what we are doing. I fear for anyone who tries to rob us.”

She added:

We encourage [carrying] and customers love that they can come here and express their rights.

This country was founded on our freedom. People can come in carrying their gun, and they can pray over their food.

Her establishment even offers gun safety classes once a month for those customers who don’t carry, but





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want to.

Over the last year a few major chains have been targeted (pun intended!) by anti-gun groups for allowing their customers to carry while shopping, drinking coffee, or eating, with modest success. Target, Starbucks, and Chipotle have each announced that they “respectfully request” that those who carry guns leave their sidearms outside. In each case the language of the announcements was carefully crafted so as to offend as few people as possible. This example from Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks, will suffice:

In recent months, Starbucks stores and our partners who work in our stores have been thrust unwillingly into the middle of this debate. That’s why I am writing today with a respectful request that customers no longer bring firearms into our stores or outside seating areas.

In each case it was a “request” and not a “demand,” leaving the option to carry open to their customers, or to shop elsewhere. [As noted elsewhere](#), this is perfectly consistent with all freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution’s Bill of Rights.

Some have started having regrets over making such requests. Just a month ago, Jack in the Box restaurants announced its “preference” that customers leave their firearms outside:

Creating a warm and inviting environment for all of our guests and employees is a top priority for Jack in the Box. The presence of guns inside a restaurant could create an uncomfortable situation for our guests and employees and lead to unintended consequences.

While we respect the rights of all our guests, we would prefer that guests not bring their guns inside our restaurants.

The irony of that request was made clear within days at one of their stores in Houston. Customers and employees were placed into “an uncomfortable situation” with “unintended consequences” when four thugs who didn’t get the memo entered the restaurant with guns drawn and forced the customers and employees to give up their wallets and purses. What’s more, this was the third armed robbery at a Jack in the Box restaurant since the company’s announcement. Perhaps thugs can read, after all?

The vast majority of restaurant chains, however, have decided not to touch the issue, granting local franchisees the power to make a decision in line with state laws. According to CNBC, McDonald’s, Dunkin’ Donuts, Baskin-Robbins, Olive Garden, Red Lobster, and LongHorn Steakhouses remain “gun friendly” in states that allow them to be so. In addition, TGI Friday’s, Subway, and Cheesecake Factory also allow customers to carry concealed if they so desire.

Pro-gun groups are springing up to help gun owners find restaurants that are friendly. There’s the Tennessee Firearms Association (TFA), whose members have canvassed most of western Tennessee and confirmed that Olive Garden, Lonestar, Picasso’s, Chili’s, O’Charley’s, Red Lobster, and Red Robin all are happy to seat gun owners and greet them with a smile.

There’s Brian Crosswhite, the owner of Cajun Experience in Leesburg, Virginia, who has just opened a website — [2Amendment.org](#) — with the intention of having gun-friendly businesses sign up and receive a “2AO - 2014” sticker for their front door. In addition, gun owners are able to use an iPhone app to find local establishments friendly to their interests.

Crosswhite is also taking advantage of the current furor over guns in restaurants by offering his customers an “Open Carry Wednesday” where those with permits get 10-percent off regular menu prices.



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Leave it to entrepreneurs to see an advantage and press forward with it. Whether with clever signage, stickers, apps, or just plain word-of-mouth, restaurateurs are taking advantage of the free market to continue to serve their customers. The current debate is only helping things along.

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