



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on April 13, 2022

Georgia 25th State to Pass Constitutional Carry

When Georgia Governor Brian Kemp [signed into law Senate Bill 319](#) — aka the Georgia Constitutional Carry Act — on Tuesday, he said:

SB 319 makes sure that law-abiding Georgians ... can protect themselves without having [to obtain] the permission of the state government.

The Constitution of the United States gives us that right, not the government....

People don't have to carry if they don't want to. But this is a constitutional authority that people have, and they certainly shouldn't have [to get] a piece of paper from the government to be able to legally carry a firearm.



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Kemp also signed into law Senate Bill 218 ensuring that citizens from other states who already have their concealed-carry licenses will also enjoy the same right in Georgia.

The law is effective immediately, and will save gun owners the \$75 license fee and the ignominy of having to undergo a mental-health check as well as a background check. This has another advantage: No background check means no entry into the recently revealed national gun registry that the ATF has been keeping under wraps for years.

Georgia's anti-gun politicians tried to block the bill by using old, outdated, and weak arguments. Democrat State Representative Kimberly Alexander intoned, "This legislation will ... allow individuals with a criminal history who purchase a gun through a private sale to legally carry a hidden, loaded weapon in our communities."

Alexander is correct: once an individual has paid his or her debt to society, their Second Amendment-protected right is restored. She is incorrect by intimating that they will cause an increase in gun violence upon their release, for at least two reasons: They may have reformed their behavior while incarcerated, and the new law would no doubt dampen any enthusiasm they have to return to their old ways simply because their search for a "soft target" — an unarmed citizen — is now going to be much more difficult.

Another anti-gun Democrat, State Senate Minority Leader Gloria Butler, ranted:

The governor is signing away lives [with] this bill. It is a sad day in Georgia when we have to watch legislation enacted that we know will cause harm, as this will....

He wants more guns on the streets, and the shameful outcome of that is more gun violence.



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Both complaints are without merit, and John Lott's research has proved it. The founder of the Crime Prevention Research Center, Lott noted in an article in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*:

Several dozen peer-reviewed academic studies show there's no evidence of any uptick in gun crimes linked to concealed carry laws, and most show violent crime declines.

Research also shows that murder rates fall even more when states move to Constitutional Carry laws.

When Lowndes County, Georgia, Sheriff Ashley Paulk was asked about the impact SB 319 might have in his county, he responded:

I don't expect that [it] will have a big impact around here. The criminals don't care — they're going to get their weapons anyway — and a law-abiding citizen with a weapon won't make trouble.

Lott agrees: Firearms violations among police officers are extremely low, as would be expected. But among those "law-abiding citizens" who now are free to carry without first being forced to get permission, firearms violations are one-seventh — 2.4 per 100,000 versus 16.5 per 100,000 — that of the police.

The real change will be in the behavior of criminals already on the streets seeking soft targets. They are now facing an existential question in their line of work: Is my target armed, or should I find another less-risky means of gain?

With half the states in the union allowing their citizens the freedom to exercise their rights under the Second Amendment, just how long will it take for the others to grant the same freedoms to their citizens?

At the moment, Florida and Nebraska are on the verge of passing similar laws, with South Carolina right behind. This is allowing the Second Amendment to occupy the place the Founders of the Republic intended: the anchor securing the others in the Bill of Rights.

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